

STORY

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*Open to all registered students of colleges
and universities in the United States.*

TERMS OF THE CONTEST

Stories submitted must be not less than 1500 nor more than 6000 words in length.

Each entry must be certified by a member of the faculty of the institution.

No college or university may submit more than two entries.

All entries must be mailed to **STORY** on or before April 15, 1934.

The submitted stories are to represent the best selection, by qualified judges, of the work of students of the school year 1933-1934. Such stories may be selected from the work done in English courses or they may be drawn from a contest specially designed to afford a selection. The story may or may not have first appeared in a college publication during the contest.

The editors of **STORY** suggest the following procedure in the selection of stories to represent any institution: The English department may officially conduct the contest, extending throughout the school year, or calling for entries that may be judged in time to have the selected two stories sent to **STORY** by April 15, 1934. The English department in such cases may select judges for the campus contest. Or, if the English department does not wish to engage in the matter officially, a contest may be arranged through the application of some member of the faculty, or of the campus literary periodical, or of a campus literary group or association. In the latter case faculty members should be represented on the Board of Judges.

All stories must be legibly written, preferably typewritten, on one side of the paper.

The winning story will be published in **STORY**, September, 1934.

STORY reserves the right to allow reprints of the winning story in short story anthologies.

WINTER

by

Dorothy McCleary

“YES, you’re kind of thin, and that’s a fact.” Hannah ran her finger along his ribs. “But then I always say that’s a good fault—one way you look at it, that is.”

They were lying in Hannah’s bed. The bed resembled Hannah, in that it was light in coloring, old, time-scarred, yet, in spite of saggings and warped seams, still staunchly durable. It had a bolster, with a wrinkled and spotted cover upon which their heads rested comfortably. Both felt lazily at ease, drowsy and indifferent, satisfied to lie warm in bed, watching the snow sift past the window-pane, listening at intervals to the depressing toll of a church bell.

“It’s a Sunday morning,” he muttered, as the bell forced itself into his brain.

“Sunday morning, hell!” said Hannah. “It’s Christmas.”

He half raised himself from the pillow and stared into her face. “No! No, not Christmas,” he pleaded.

“Well, I’m not lyin’ to you, am I? There, look for yourself.” She took his head between her long hard hands and turned it in the direction of the wall nearest him. A big calendar hung there, its numbers two inches high, bearing on its upper half a life-size picture of a baby yawning. He studied this for several minutes. “Yes,” he said, “that’s very nice. That’s a very nice calendar.”

“It *is* pretty, ain’t it? I got it from Ike’s place, that place on the corner—you know it? I like to have something bright to cast my eyes on now and again. You know, I get blue, ’specially in the winter time. God damn it, I get lonesome.” She reached out and put her arm under his head. “I don’t always have congenial company, and that’s God’s truth.” Under the blankets her feet sought his thin, cold ones and enveloped them in a warm embrace.

"But no joking, now," he begged. "Is today the twenty-fifth? For God's sake, girl, tell me the truth. Go on, tell me. I can bear it. But don't *trifle* with me! Don't *jest*—"

"Say, can't you read a calendar? My God!" cried Hannah.

He looked again at the tremendous chart. But he could not bring his mind to a focus on it. Instead, he began to read the numbers aloud, "One, two, three, four, five—"

"Say!" Hannah shouted. "Lookit where I point. Lookit, see that there 25? That red one. It's *red*—see?"

"Yes," he said, quickly withdrawing his eyes.

"Well, then, am I lyin' to you?"

He searched her face with painful concentration. His eyes examined every detail, every wrinkle, each hair of her yellow eyelashes, the little ragged white scar at the edge of her lip, the ears with their soft appetizing lobes, the wild hair. "Oh, God," he whispered. He shuddered and turned away from her. "God, but that hits me hard. That hits me right where I live." He closed his eyes, and his face contorted itself; he broke into sobbing.

Hannah watched him idly, just as a dog, lying with one eye lolled open, might watch another dog biting at fleas. He had not put up a hand to cover his face, but cried face up, unashamed. His hair was thin and gray, his neck a criss-cross of wrinkles, and he had little untended tufts of black hair in his ears.

Hannah looked more intently at his face. It began to remind her of something—she couldn't think what it was. She lay, frowning and scratching her head, until all at once it came to her: yes, it was the lion cub she had seen one day at a vaudeville show! It stood on a narrow shelf in the cage and whimpered, and wouldn't go through its tricks. The keeper lashed it in the face with his whip. The cub howled. The keeper lashed it again and again, sometimes across the eyes, until Hannah could stand no more of it. Up she had jumped from her seat, shaking her fist at the keeper. "Leave that brute be, do you hear me?" she had yelled. "You lay off that, now—I'm tellin' you—or I'll call a cop!" God, yes, the whole thing came back to her. Maybe she'd had a little extra gin before she left home. Well, anyhow, as she remembered it, she tried to climb up on the stage and kill the man. "I'll slice you to pieces with your own whip!" she called. "Aw, she's drunk," people cried. "Whyn't you hire a hall, lady?" "Go on, give 'er the air—." "Leave me at him!" Hannah yelled savagely. But two men, grabbing hold of her, shoved

her along and out through a side-exit. "And here's your hat, old woman," somebody had yelled, throwing it after her.

Hannah frowned, and lay staring up at the cracks in the ceiling. Suddenly she gave a hearty guffaw. "Yes," she said, laughing until tears came to her eyes, "Hannah got the bum's rush that time, all right, all right."

But the face of that poor little cub! With his eyes squeezed shut, and such a pitiful wrinkled look between his eyes. He stood there and just *took* the whip, "just like a blessed saint," Hannah said.

"I don't give a God damn on this lousy earth what happens to *people*," she cried out. "But I can't stand it to see a dumb beast suffer! Damn if I can. No, it gives me a feeling in the pit of my stomach."

The man beside her groaned and shook with his sobbing.

"Say, lay off that, will you?" she bawled. She sat up in bed, yawned wide, and clicked her jaws together sharply. "I'll make a hot cup o' coffee."

She pushed off the blanket coverings and touched her feet to the cold floor. "Holv Christmas," she cried, shivering, "where's my shoes?" She poked under the bed, but couldn't find them. "But, my God, what's *this*?" She stretched herself under the bed. "Lookit here—here's my *umbrella*! Say, it's months since I saw you, babygirl!" She kissed its dusty folds and set it lovingly in a corner of the room. Then she ran to the bureau and pulled a one-burner stove out of the top drawer, attached it to the gas-jet, struck a match and warmed her hands over the flame. "We're pretty comfortable on a day like this, baby, I'll tell the world."

The man, exhausted and refreshed by his tears, roused himself to watch her. Her great body, with its long yellowish back, its visible ribs, and her tawny haunches and great bare feet, seemed to fill the room with animal warmth. The sight of her was soothing to him, and enlivening, as if a companionable Great Dane were moving about the room on its hind legs.

"What did you say your name was?" he asked.

"Hannah."

"Hannah? That's funny. I had an old aunt once, named Hannah. Auntie Hannah. She was stone-deaf. You could go up behind her and yell 'Fire! Thieves! Bloody murder!' "

He glanced around the room. A bony old trunk stood in one corner, with a piece of goods laid over it. On top of it he saw a bottle, a tumbler, and his own clothes sprawled in a heap. Beside the window was a chair in the last stages of disintegration; a crucifix hung above it. On three hooks beside the

bed were Hannah's clothes: a dark skirt or two, hanging limply by their belts; a polka-dot dressing sacque; an old tan coat with a hat stuck into one of the pockets; a flannel petticoat, and a man's bathrobe with several neat patches on it here and there. He looked again at the dressing sacque, and reached up to touch it; there came from it a faint reminiscent odor of buckwheat cakes. "Well, my girl," he said, "you've got a nice, homelike little place here."

Hannah measured the water and coffee into the coffee-pot, then took up a pair of sharp little scissors and approached the bed. "Now sit up, baby," she said, "I want to trim that hair out of your ears."

He sat up, and Hannah wrapped a blanket tenderly around his shoulders.

"You ought to look after these ears yourself," she said.

"What for?" he asked impatiently. "What does it matter?"

Hannah laughed in his face. "Even a cat keeps herself clean. Ain't you as good as a cat?"

He shook his head and looked mournfully out at the falling snow. "You don't understand me," he said. "No, no, you don't understand me, or you wouldn't talk to me that way. Keeping myself clean—no, that's not the point. No, that signifies nothing at all to me at the present time."

"All right. Hold your head *still*, baby!"

"And bringing a *cat* into it—." He frowned heavily. "Yes, a cat licks itself all over, true! Because it doesn't know any better. Because a cat's outlook on life is what you might call—shallow; shallow in the extreme!"

"Now, turn the other ear."

"And furthermore, when a cat's *sick*, it doesn't keep itself clean, does it?" He looked up at her sharply. "Indeed no, when it's sick it has other things to think about. For once in its life it has something to think about besides its own fur. You can mark my words: a sick cat is a dirty cat! Or, vice versa—. And rightly so," he added, in an oratorical tone, "for by the outer trappings can we thus judge of the conditions within. And there, my girl, we have my situation in a nutshell: I look like a sick man and I *am* a sick man."

"You don't look very sick to me," said Hannah.

"It's the *soul* I'm talking of," he snapped, "not the body."

"Oh." Hannah smiled to herself as she turned the fire out under the coffee. She opened her top bureau-drawer, took out a bag of sugar and poured

some into a big white cup and some into a tumbler. "You can drink out of the cup, baby," she said, filling it with coffee and handing it to him. Then she unwrapped another bag and took from it part of a loaf of bread; this she tore into two hunks, handing the man one and laying the other on her half of the bolster. Running to the window she jerked it up, letting in a quick sharp blast of snow which made the man's teeth chatter. A bottle half full of frozen milk was buried under the snow on the window-ledge. She scooped some of this into his cup. "Ice cream, baby," she murmured; she kissed the top of his head where the hair was sparsest. "But not for Hannah—gimme it as black as hell. God, I can't get it too strong or too black!" She brought her glass of coffee and crawled into the bed beside him.

Leaning against the head of the bed, with the bolster propped up behind their backs, it was cosy and comfortable. The man sipped his coffee gratefully, raising his head like a bird after each sip to stare out of the window.

"Say, I'm cold," said Hannah. "Reach me down that jacket, will you, baby?"

He turned and pulled the polka-dot dressing sacque from its hook. As it passed his face he smelled again the faint odor of buckwheat cakes, a familiar and homey smell. As Hannah pulled the sacque around her and slipped her arms into it he watched after it with hungry eyes. "That's a very pretty dressing sacque," he said.

"I don't know is it so pretty," said Hannah, "but it keeps me warm."

"Someone I knew once had a dress like that," he said, "all polka-dots." He reached over and took a corner of the goods in his hand, caressing it. "As a man grows older, you understand, he likes to see things he's seen before. I *love* to see things I've seen before. I'd love to see my old home!" He took a warm sip of coffee and bit off a piece from the nubbin of bread, carefully, fearful of breaking a tooth. "But—well—I suppose the old home's gone up the spout many a year ago; sold for taxes or what not—. But listen to me, my girl: there's not a stone of it, not one square inch of it, not a *nail hole* in it, that's not sacred to me! The old home! Why, it's where I first drew breath. And let me tell you something—it's all in *here*!" He tapped his forehead. "Yes, I can see it complete." He looked dreamily at Hannah. "My mother's dead, too," he said. "I know in my heart that she's dead. My poor little mother," he whimpered, "behold thy handiwork!"

"My mother was laid away eleven years ago," said Hannah, "come Easter."

He pondered this a while. "They all come to it," he said. "I'll be the next." He looked at his right hand, stretching the fingers stiff until the bones stood out like a duck's web-foot. "I live close to the bone these days."

"Well, for God's sake!" Hannah reached out and boxed his ear. "You're cheerful company, ain't you? My God, I'd sooner take my cup o' coffee and drink it sittin' on a slab in the morgue."

"But *Lily's* not dead!" he announced triumphantly. "No, Lily is as beautiful, as beautiful—" He paused, and a radiant smile spread over his face. "She's as beautiful as on the day I took her for my bride. Lily McMasters was her maiden name. And she was sweeter than a flower! We had children, too!" he exclaimed. "Our first born was a girl, little Editha; then the boy, later."

"My married sister has two girls," said Hannah, "and that makes it nice for her, what with all the work around the house and all. She had a boy, but she lost him. She had a picture of him taken in his coffin. God, but it was sad! With the eyes closed and everything. My sister said it looked just like he was sleeping. But I said, 'Oh, no it don't; it looks like just what it is, a dead baby.' And I don't think it's good luck to photograph the dead—do you? You never know, *you* know."

"I left her," he moaned. "I left my dear wife." He covered his face with one hand. Heavy sobs shook from him.

"Go on, drink your coffee," said Hannah.

He took a few sips, breathing heavily into the cup. "Because a young man has hot blood in his veins—he flares up, you understand? A young man's not accountable. . . . And the babies kept me awake at night. It was summer, and hot as the Old Harry. The flies pestered me. Everything pestered me. Lily was always wanting money, and there *was* no money; none, that is, for fripperies. I had only a clerk's job, for I was new, I was just beginning. I was just a *young* fellow, and—. Well, I'd come home in the evening from the office, tired out, and I'd want nothing but to sit down alone in my comfortable Morris chair—just to sit there, sit there and close my eyes, and think. I'm a dreamer, you know; I'm a philosopher. I must have peace and harmony. But I found no peace there, no, that I did not. Whining babies and filthy diapers, night after night, that's what I found. That's what my life was made up of!"

"Well, say," asked Hannah, "what do you expect, with kids?"

"And one night," he said fiercely, "I came home with a new book for myself—and I can tell you what the book was!" He glared sternly at Hannah. "*First Principles*, by Herbert Spencer! A gold mine to me! Yes, *better* than finding a gold mine. And I started to sit down in my chair to read the opening chapter. For I hadn't even looked into the preface of it, not even looked over the index! I was saving that great pleasure, mark you, until I should be alone, in my own chair. But when I went to sit down, what, think you, did I find in the seat of my chair? I found a puddle! A *puddle* on the cushion of my Morris chair! And Lily just laughed at me! 'Oh, put a cushion on top of it,' she called out, laughing, 'you'll never feel the difference.' Well, that was the last straw. I took up my book and my hat—"

"God!" said Hannah, bursting into laughter, "a cushion, she said, eh? 'Put a cushion on top!' Say, that's pretty cute, that's—"

"But oh, what folly," he cried, "what bitter, bitter folly! I set my hat on top of my head, and I said to her, *to my Lily*, I said, 'Go on and laugh—go right on and live like a pig in a pigpen if you like that way of living, which it seems you do. As for me,' I said, 'I've had enough of it. I'm *through*!' Lily didn't say one word. She was standing at the little table, looking down at what she was doing, stirring something in a bowl. But something happened to her as she stood there. Something *went out* in her; just as if I'd blown out the light of a candle, do you understand? And she, that was always so sweet, and bright, and—'Little light of my life' is what I used to call her. But yes, so help me, something went out in Lily. I killed something in Lily, I tell you, with my own voice, my own words—

"And that made me all the angrier. If she'd flared up at me, or said something, then I might have cooled down. But to see her give way to me, like some meek little rabbit-creature! 'Oh, you Patient Griselda, you!' I shouted to her. I looked down to see what she was doing, and I saw that she was putting some kind of custard or other on a pudding, to make a special treat for me—Lily knows I'm dead-set on pudding. Well, she kept stirring it and stirring it and stirring it, until I felt I'd go mad. I up and took hold of the spoon she held, and with a swipe of my hand—like this—I gave it an ugly toss, and a little bit of the custard flew up and hit her on the cheek!"

He groaned, as if from intense pain. Perspiration stood on his face. "Yes, that's what I did and I won't deny it," he said. He turned to Hannah.

by Dorothy McCleary

"Now I've told the worst sin of my life," he said solemnly, "and I declare I feel better already for the telling of it. It's been bottling it up, these long years, that's been the—"

"*Sin!*" said Hannah, contemptuously. "That there's no sin. Lots of couples throw things—plates and things—at each other, and what of it? Say, do you see that crack up there in the ceiling?"

"Couples!" He winced in disgust at the term. "Ah, no, but not like Lily and me."

"But, of course, leaving her was a sin," said Hannah unctuously. "Say, do you see that big crack up there, the one right over my head?"

"Yes, yes," he said with impatience.

"Well, that there crack's the Mississippi River!" She looked at him and gave him a sharp nudge with her elbow. "Or so I call it," she added. "That's where my married sister lives, you know. She lives just outside Clarksdale, Mississippi. And she's always been after me and after me, to go down and stay with her—make my home with her, and all, see? She said how nice and quiet it was down there—just her husband and the two girls. I guess she does get kind of lonesome for her own kin, same as anybody else. 'Come on down, Sister,' she writes me, 'I'll send you the cash for your fare if that's what's holdin' you.' She's sure a dandy good-hearted woman, and I wouldn't hear a word spoken against her, only. . . . Well, she kept tellin' me about the peace and quiet I'd have down there in the country, and all, and how grand the Mississippi River was—until I'm damned if I didn't get to thinkin' about it kind of serious."

She took up the coffee-pot from the floor beside her and refilled his cup. "Drink it up, little baby," she said.

"Yes, I'd lay here on the bed by the hour, lookin' up at that crack, and turnin' it over in my mind, this way and that. My sister don't know much about me, see? And I studied in my mind—would we hit it off good, or no? And say," Hannah slapped his leg in her amusement, "I got so's I'd *dream* about that Mississippi River! And how did it look in my dreams? Wait till I tell you. Say, do you want to know how it looked in my dreams? Why, like these here Easter gardens I used to have when we was kids. Yes, all with green grass, like—and rabbits and lambs, and baby chicks. Can you beat that? Only there was trees, too, like some I seen in the movies. They look like these big birds—storks or ostriches or something. Just a skinny trunk, then a

big fat tree-part like a palm-leaf fan, and that's all the tree there is to it. Do you know how I mean?"

"Certainly," he said. "You mean the palm or the palmetto. But you ought to know better than to look for such vegetation in *upper* Mississippi! The palm tree requires a moist, semi-tropical—"

"Yeah? Well, they don't grow down by my sister's place, and I'll take oath to that, baby!" Hannah went on. "But listen here—." She tapped him on the arm, significantly. "I dreamed of it *three nights running!* That's the sign, you know. Yes, that means Important Changes Are Coming Into Your Life. So I thought, 'Oh, well, all right, anything for a change; I'll go on down.' So I went down."

"But, on the other hand," he continued, rousing himself into animation, "my supposition would be that down around the delta of the river the palmetto—"

"*Baby!*" cried Hannah, "never again!" She mauled his ear and kneaded his left cheek, to let him know she meant what she said. "Never! Inside of seven days by the clock I was back here, stickin' the key in my own door again. Yes, I'm tellin' you! I came in and set my old grip down and laid down on the bed and had a good long laugh at myself. Hannah visitin'! Say, don't make me laugh. Never again, as long as I'm alive and kickin'. Lookit, you can take my *corpse* down there, and welcome. I don't know but that's just what that place's good for. Yes, you can take my dead body down there and throw it in the dirty water. And see if I care!" She looked at him belligerently. He was sighing, and dipping little bits of his bread in the coffee.

"But it wasn't the Mississippi so much," she said. "It was my sister's place. 'Quiet and peaceful!' Yes, in one way it was so quiet I could've stabbed myself, just for something to do. I couldn't smoke, I didn't know where to get a drink, and there wasn't a living soul I could sit down and have a good long talk with—like you and me now, see? But *peaceful*? Say, I had to listen to Carrie and her husband jawin' at one another all day long and half the night. And Carrie's changed! My God, but that girl has changed. She used to raise the devil, back when we was kids. She rode me a pace, all right—a regular Miss Spitfire. And now I wish't you could see her! God, I cried when I seen her. She's two years younger'n me, and she looks ninety years old! I'm tellin' you. All wrung out like an old rag. No, there's nothing alive in Carrie now but her tongue. 'Say, Carrie,' I says, 'you don't *live*, girlie. You don't know what life *is!*' And that got her mad. Then her and I had a jawin'

match, back and forth and back and forth—My God, I can't live like that. I like things pleasant all 'round; give and take, like—but in a nice way. I can't stand jawin'!"

"When I shut my eyes like this, I can see Lily," he murmured, nodding his head.

"Do you see this room?" she demanded. "This room is plenty big enough for me. I get along first-rate here, and nobody's got the right to say to me 'Do this,' or 'Don't do that or I'll kill you!' Understand? No naggin', no jawin'. If people don't like the way I act I can damn quick tell them to get to hell out of here—and I'm not too shy to give 'em a good kick too, so's they'll know who's talkin'. Yes, the way I look at it is, live your own life and live it alone!"

"And so I have done!" he cried. "I left the bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Without a word I walked out of the house and into the street. God knows what I had in mind to do, for I went straight for the docks, down back of the house. I thought to myself, 'Life's over for me, now. Now I'm done for.' But I was too hot-headed to drown myself. 'No, by God,' I said, 'I'll live my life alone. Free of burdens. I'll live like a flower of the field.' " His head sank down on his chest.

"If that ain't you all over!" Hannah roared with laughter. "Wanted to be free, with nobody to say yes or no to you—like a tomcat, eh? Well, I'd say if you could look after yourself as good as a cat, all right. But look at you, poor baby! Look how scrawny you are. You need a shave, and a good bath, and a hot meal in that little stomach of yours. You need somebody to look after you. Say, my God, if it wasn't that I got my hands full now I'd do it myself!"

"No, no—I need nothing," he said irritably. "What I suffer is *here*," and he pointed to his heart. "I suffer, and I'm dying, from a dread disease—*remorse*! That's what's killing me. If only I had kissed Lily goodbye—if only I'd gone back and kissed her on the lips. I thought maybe some day I'd go back, with my pockets filled with gold pieces; and I'd bring doll-babies for the girl, and a sled—oh, a sled I fully intended to bring back with me! And a big bag of fruit, all splendid, choice fruit, large pears, big black grapes, plums, et cetera. Why, I can see my little babies so clearly! You'd think I could reach out my hand and touch them, I can see them so clearly. They looked so sweet, so innocent, when they were asleep. The girl had little yellow curls—not like these ninny-pinny clipped heads you see nowadays. No,

my girl looked like an angel. Did you ever read a little book called *Editha's Burglar*? There was a picture in it that anyone might take for my Editha. That's why we named her Editha."

"That's a pretty name, do you know it?" said Hannah.

"It is, isn't it? It's a beautiful name. Editha. Editha. I believe in giving girls pretty names, and boys strong names. It makes men of them."

"Yes, and my sister did just the other way. She named her boy, the one that died, Archduke. But the two girls she named Ella and Hannah, the youngest one for me. And I think my name's too plain, don't you? I never was pleased with my name. I wish they'd of called me Phyllis—that's my favorite name for a girl."

"My name," he announced impressively, "is Thomas Quinn O'Hagerty!"

"You're an Irishman, by God," said Hannah, running her hand affectionately over his hair.

"Scotch-Irish," he said. "My people came from County Antrim. Orangemen, all of them. And my boy's the last of the tribe." He drained his coffee-cup and set it on the floor beside the bed.

"I've got some Irish blood in me," said Hannah. "But mostly my folks was Swedes."

She jumped out of bed, ran to the bureau and came back with a small white package. "Lookit here," she said. "My niece sent me this for Christmas. She always sends me something. One year it was a breast-pin, and I got eighty cents for it!" She opened the paper. "See? Tissue paper and everything. Here's the card that goes with it. You can read it if you want to."

He took the card from her and held it in the palm of his hand, squinting and frowning to decipher it. "'With dearest love and cheery Xmas greetings to Auntie Hannah from her loving niece, Hannah,'" he read haltingly.

"It's a sachet," said Hannah. She held a pink satin bag up to his nose. He drew back in anger. "Don't do so!" he begged. "I can't bear it."

"She sent me some peppermint-drops, too. Here." She put a peppermint in his mouth.

He rolled it on his tongue; his eyes lighted with pleasure. He smiled, and, reaching out, he linked one of Hannah's hands with his own and settled himself comfortably against the head of the bed. "Merciful God," he whispered, "a peppermint!"

"Here, eat another, sweetheart—go ahead, put a whole lot in your mouth at once."

"Two things I love in this world," he said, in a voice faltering with emotion, "two things that are *dear* to me, are red peppermints and old-fashioned ginger cookies. But ginger cookies you cannot get nowadays. You get nothing but leather—flavored with glue!"

"You said it, baby."

"But when I was a boy, by Christ, I knew what good food was! My mother had a kitchen as big as a sitting-room. And she could take a piece of meat—*any* piece of meat—and put it in a pan with a little dab of butter; then she'd pick up an onion and peel it and slice it and put that in; then she'd open the spice-box and pick out a snip of sage, about as much as you could hold between your finger and thumb—. Then she'd go and lift the meat up and stir under it and put it down again. She was a *little* thing, my mother was, and quick moving! She wore a long soft white apron; it always looked too long for her, for she looked like a little girl in it. And do you know, I never can understand how I could ever have been born to her! For here I am, a man grown—and she was just a child, as you might say. Well, she'd lift up the lid of the pan and peep in, and I declare you'd think she was looking at a baby in its cradle. Such *love* as she'd get into her face! As if she were coaxing the meat along—And then, after a time, it would get done, and she'd set us down to it. Was that *meat*? Oh, Jesus!"

"You can't get good cookin' nowadays," said Hannah.

He groaned softly to himself, his eyes tight shut. "My mother's dead now. I know it without being told. She's gone from me forever."

"Say, I think you need something to eat," said Hannah.

"No, no, no," he said irritably.

"I can't cook good here, on account of the damn fire-inspector lookin' in on me any hour of the day or night, till you'd think I was a monkey at the zoo. But I know his step, see? He's got one foot shorter than the other, and he walks like this—da *dum*, da *dum*, da *dum*. God, I nearly die laughin' when I hear him comin' up the stairs! I run and stick my little old hot-plate in the drawer, sizzling hot and all. And whatever's cookin' on top of the stove has to go in the drawer too. Then he knocks at the door, and I call out, 'Yoo-hoo, sweetie, come on in,' real lovin' like. And when he opens the door there I stand, makin' like I'm doin' my hair, or takin' a bath or something!" She laughed and tweaked his chin. "But lookit here, little boy, I'll tell you

what you and me'll do. You know Ike's place, up at the corner? Well, Ike's a good friend of mine. There's a damn square fellow, if I ever seen one. Ike's a prince, no mistake. Well, Ike'll let me cook us a little Christmas dinner on his stove, back of the screen, like, from the room where the bar is. I do it any time I please. Ike knows I got to put something hot and solid into my stomach every now and again to keep up my spirits. And the same goes for *you*, or any other friend I want to take there with me, see?"

"My mother could cook pork chops, with a little bit of sage sticking to them, as tender as the day they were born! And hashed brown potatoes—oh, God!" His head rolled distractedly to and fro on the bolster.

"Just the two of us," said Hannah, "just you and me. Or maybe Ike'll sit down to the table with us. Ike hasn't got no wife; just a old Chineese woman—she don't come to the table. And I'll get a little chicken! It's dear as hell, but my God it won't break me for once. I'll make us up some dumplings, and get a couple of handfuls of rice out of Ike's kitchen; he won't care. And he won't miss it if I just pick up a nice big fat turnip—he keeps them down cellar," she added in a sly voice. "Yes, and we'll have something to celebrate with too. That's where Ike comes in strong. Ike'll give us something red hot! Oh, *baby!*"

Hannah was so pleased at the prospect that she began to bounce up and down in bed. "Whoopee!" she shouted. "Merry Christmas, baby—same to you and many of 'em!" She caught hold of him and gave him a terrific kiss that nearly broke his teeth. "I'll go out now and get the chicken and leave her sizzle all forenoon." She leaped out of bed and began to hunt for her stockings.

"No, no," he said, lying back in bed and pulling the covers up to his chin. "You'll have to count me out of that, my girl."

"Why?" she asked angrily. "What's eatin' you now?"

"You don't understand me," he said. "You mean me well, and I thank you for it." A tear worked its way slowly down his cheek and fell on his hand. "But you know . . . You don't know what I feel—in *here.*" He beat his hand against his heart. "I'm not just *anybody*, you know; I'm—I'm—"

"Oh, my God!" Hannah roared with laughter. "Why, baby, you're nothin' new to Hannah. I've seen hundreds like you. Maybe you're some thinner than most, but that's all."

"I'm Thomas Quinn O'Hagerty," he said. "And my grandfather was an

Irish gentleman, with a hickory walking-stick, and lace cuffs to his coat-sleeves. He took snuff!"

"Say, you must think you're some kind of god-damned little God, eh? Something *special*!"

He shook his head, and looked down with distaste at one of his bare feet which had worked out from under the covers. "Oh, no," he said. "No, I guess not. No, I don't set myself up as much. Not *now*, I don't. But God knows I did once. When my blood was young, and I was a youth. For when I was a youth, mark you, I had the priceless ingredient—the with-out-which-nothing. I had the eyes to see and the heart to feel. That's the stuff that makes a philosopher, and a *poet*!"

"God, but you do need a shave, baby," said Hannah; she wrapped the blanket more amply around his shoulders.

"I'm fifty-seven years of age!" he declared.

"Well, what of it?" asked Hannah.

"And what am I? I haven't a penny in the world. I haven't a friend. Well, no matter—I'm poor company these days; nobody knows that better than I do. I'm morose, melancholy. It actually *pains* me to laugh! But to think that T. Q. O'Hagerty should live like this—friendless, penniless. Why, I live worse than an animal; for animals, poor things, are not responsible. No blame attaches to a starving dog in the gutter. But when a man, when a *gentleman*—ah, that's what cuts into me; that's the two-edged sword which cuts within and without."

"Poor baby," murmured Hannah. "Say, I've a good mind to give you a shave, myself."

He squeezed his eyes shut and rubbed his forehead. "And now lately I feel confused in my head. Things aren't so clear to me as they used to be. When I come to a street crossing, for instance, I have great difficulty." He looked up at her piteously. "I don't know whether it's safe to cross, or not. I can't figure it out, for it all gets into a jumble in my mind. When I see the automobiles stop moving and people going across the street, I'm afraid to start, because I can still see the automobiles going by—in my mind's eye, you understand."

"Yes, I could tell the minute I laid eyes on you that you didn't know how to take care of yourself," said Hannah, combing his hair back with her fingers. "You'll get run down by a heavy truck some day, that's about what'll happen to you—unless you starve to death first."

"I don't care," he said, "what happens to my *body*. Hunger, cold, pain, they mean nothing to me. Reality," he added proudly, "means nothing to me—*nothing!*"

"Yeah, but you gotta eat and sleep and keep yourself covered from the cold. And where's your hat, Tom, answer me that! I found you walkin' around last night in the snow, without a hat to your head, shiverin' and whimperin' like a puppy dog. Haven't you *got* a hat, somewhere?"

"I did have a hat," he said with dignity, "but it blew off and got under traffic. I couldn't follow it, could I?"

"Oh, *you!*" cried Hannah, exasperated. "Well, I'll see what I can do." She went to the trunk, opened it, and banged the heavy tray out onto the floor. "Seems like there's always a couple of hats in here—but how they got in here God himself don't know." She dug fiercely into the trunk, like a dog in a rabbit's hole, tossing out stray articles: suspenders, torn collars, old dirty corsets, empty bottles, shoes. "Ah *ha!*" she called, "here we are—here's a swell little hat! Try her on, baby."

It was a black derby, frayed along the edges and collapsed at one side of the crown. Hannah punched it out with an experienced fist, rubbed it briskly across her dressing sacque and placed it on his head. "It might've been *born* on you," she declared.

He took the hat off and turned it around in his hands. "That's a very good hat," he said. "That's the style I used to wear—." He looked out at the snow, falling now in thin drops almost like rain. He pressed the hat warmly to his breast. "I wore a hat like this in my courting days," he said. His face worked. "But I broke my vows," he moaned, "I broke the vows I made to her on bended knee!"

"Now, now, don't blubber again, for God's sake," said Hannah. "Get up and get your clothes on, then I'll skip out and buy a nice tender little hen."

He put on his socks and shoes, and stumbled shivering into his clothes.

"Sit down in this chair," said Hannah, "I'm going to give you a shave." He sat down, and she fastened a flannel petticoat around his neck. She rummaged in the bureau drawer and brought out an old brown-handled razor. "Yes, I'm gonna give you a shave you won't forget, baby," she said, feeling his rough cheeks and the stubble on his chin. "Just look at you!" She burst out laughing. "So you're the one that wanted to be free! Wanted to live your own life. God, that's a good one, all right. Yes, that'll hand me many

a laugh. But say, I'd think you'd had enough of it by this time. Why don't you go back to your wife, Tom?"

"Go *back*?" He looked up at her, stupefied. "Back to Lily? Never! Never while I have a drop of blood in my veins."

Hannah brushed up a stiff lather in the coffee-cup. "Why not? She couldn't do nothing to you, could she? If she was gonna have you up for desertion she'd of done it long ago."

"You don't understand me," he said frowning; "it's not a question of—Oh, God!" He had caught sight of the top of his scraggy head in the looking-glass. "Look at my hair, all gray! Here I am, all alone in the world, fifty-seven years old. In no time at all I'll be sixty!"

"Well, ain't that what I'm tellin' you? You're gettin' on in years, you're not a young man any more—no use in hidin' it from you. And I say you need some one to look after you. I'd do it myself and welcome, only I've already got my hands full, see? You poor babies! God, there's so many of you runnin' loose in this town, that I—. Say, do you know if your wife's still alive?"

"That she is!" he cried heartily. "3912 Sycamore Avenue—and if you don't believe me you can look her up in the telephone book. There she is, 'O'Hagerty, Mrs. Thomas Q.' Many's the time of day I go to the book for no other purpose but to run my finger over her name. It's written on my heart in letters of gold!"

"Oh, my God," said Hannah. She stropped the razor against a leather panel of the trunk.

"Once," he said, "I talked to her over the 'phone. I heard her dear voice!"

"Say, *did* you?"

"Yes, I did. I'd had a little something to drink, and I couldn't keep from it. I took down the receiver and called her number. Then I'd have run away—but my legs got kind of paralyzed. Then *Lily* came to the 'phone; I heard her sweet voice!" He shut his eyes and a beatific smile spread over his face.

"Well, tell me," said Hannah, "what did you say to her?"

"She said, 'Hello.' And at first I couldn't bring myself to speak. My throat, my—I couldn't make sound come. And she said it again, 'Hello?' like that, enquiring, as you might say. I said 'Hello, is this Mrs. O'Hagerty?'

She said, 'Yes, who is this?' And all I could think of to say was, 'Well, is Mr. O'Hagerty there?'

"Ain't you the sly one," said Hannah, laughing.

"Then I heard a voice say, 'This is Mr. O'Hagerty—.' He laughed hysterically. "It was my boy," he said. "My second-born. Mr. O'Hagerty! And I left him wetting his diaper!" He passed his hand over his face as if to iron his features into repose.

"All right," said Hannah, "hold still." She applied the rich, coffee-colored lather, and gave the razor a final turn or two across the sole of her shoe. "Hold still, like my own little baby boy."

She finished the shaving and gave his hair a good brushing. "You need a haircut, too; but Hannah's shears ain't sharp enough for it, see? But I tell you what I'll do. I'll give you the price of a haircut—and you see that you get it, do you hear me?"

"Oh, haircut, haircut!" he cried out in disgust. "I don't want a haircut. What's all this nonsense—shaving, haircut? It leaves my heart the same, doesn't it? It doesn't change the inside of me. No, no, what I'm after is something to wash me within—*absolution*, that's what I'm after!"

"Sit up, now."

He sat up, rubbing his stiffened neck, and watched while Hannah combed his hair. "Now, where do you part it?" she asked. "In the middle?" "I don't care," he said wearily. Hannah made a deep, masterly part, and curved the hair back neatly above each ear. "You got a cute-shaped little head," she said.

He looked at himself, then at Hannah, and back again to himself, frowning in bewilderment. "By God," he said, "I've never seen you before in my life, have I? But I've seen that fellow in there. God, if it weren't for my gray hair I'd take oath this had happened before! Tell me, my girl, did you ever stand just like that, and comb my hair, while I sat *here*—." He stopped and covered his face with his hands. "*No!* Give me the comb!" he commanded sternly. "I know now what I'm thinking of. I want to part my hair on the *side*." Laboriously he combed and parted it. "There," he said, "that's the way *Lily* liked me to wear it."

"Say, that looks good, too," said Hannah, taking the comb back again to add a little flourish to the forelock. "You got a handsome little face, do you know it? That is, once you clean it up, so's a body can get a squint at it."

He looked at himself, his lips trembling and his eyes traveling wor-

shipfully over and over his image. "Yes," he said, "that's T.Q. I'd know that chap anywhere. Now bring me the hat!" he cried. "Bring it here and put it on me, and let's see."

Hannah brushed the hat and set it on his head. "There now," she said, "you look like the President of the United States!"

Stiffly he got up out of the chair and drew in a deep breath, swelling out his chest. "I don't mind telling you," he said, "that they had great hopes of me, when I left the university. 'Thomas Quinn O'Hagerty, A.B., Maxima cum Laude,' that's the way my ticket read! And if you're sceptical about it you can look it up in the records."

"That's right," said Hannah, "that's the way I like to hear you talk *Loud*, like that, and jolly. You could be damned good company, do you know it? Here, baby," she brought out a bottle from behind the trunk. "This is Hannah's best gin. I don't give this out, only to just a few; it's too good, and it's too strong for most." She took out the paper stopper and handed him the bottle. "Here's lookin' at you," she cried. "Take a good long hot one!"

He closed his eyes and breathed in a long slow draught. "A-a-ahhh! now could I drink hot blood—" he orated, "and do such deeds, et cetera." He looked at himself in the glass. "I've broken every promise I ever made to a living creature. If I say I'll do a thing, you can lay your bottom dollar on it that I *won't* do it. Never! Not while I've got the breath of life in me to resist!" He beat his breast proudly. Putting his arm around Hannah's waist, he drew her to his side. "See that fellow in there?" he cried. "That's the champion breaker-of-promises in the whole *world*!"

"That's nothing," said Hannah, putting her cheek against his, "nobody can keep promises—that's why I never make 'em."

"Yes, but that's just where the difference comes in," he said loftily. "You and I, my girl, we're fish of different seas. You don't make promises; well and good. But *I*—I do make them. And I mean to keep them. Deep in my heart I *mean* to keep my promises. Look at that face in there! Look at it and tell me: can't you see, just to look at that face, that my word's as good as my bond?"

"Sure," said Hannah.

"Yes, *sir*, I'm the genuine article, through and through. When I stood up at the altar beside Lily McMasters, June the twenty-third, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, I looked the minister square in the face. 'I will!' I said."

He brought his fist down heavily on the bureau. "Do you *hear* me?" he thundered.

"Sure I hear you. I been through the marriage service myself."

"All dressed in white," he said dreamily. "With a Lille veil of lace on her head. And white kid gloves. One finger of the glove was split, so that I could put the ring on. And I did put it on. 'With this ring I thee wed.' Then Lily turned and looked at me. 'I, Thomas, take thee, Lily'—. Afterwards, when she took off her little bridal veil, there was a flower in her hair, caught in her curls—one sweet little orange blossom. I have it to this day!" he shouted. Reaching in his pocket he drew out a few dried particles mixed with tobacco and tinfoil; tenderly he kissed them and put them back again. "She wears her hair up in the back," he said, "with a little yellow back-comb. But below the comb, mark you, are some little golden ringlets. I loved to kiss them. And just behind her ears, ah! that's where I loved best to kiss her. Yes, and on the lips!"

He groaned, and catching hold of Hannah he clung to her, sobbing. "Fifty-seven years old, today," he sobbed. "Just fifty-seven years ago today I was first laid in my mother's arms!"

"What," Hannah screamed, "is today your *birthday*? My God, baby-doll, why didn't you let Hannah know? Say—wait'll Ike hears about it! Ike's got a special birthday cocktail. It'll half kill you, sweetheart. 'Tail of the Rat,' Ike calls it. But I call it Rat Poison. But lookit here," she handed him the bottle again—"take a birthday gurgle on Hannah, by God, and another, another. *Say*, by God!" She was overcome with solicitude. She pinched him, slapped him on the back and thighs, tickled him in the ribs. "Baby!" she exclaimed, "I'm gonna give you a present! God damned if I'm not."

She reached inside of her bureau-drawer and brought out her chamois grouch-bag. "Lemme see, now." She examined the contents: there were eleven limp and wrinkled one-dollar bills. She counted out five of them. "Here you are, baby, here's half of all Hannah has in the world. It's for you, baby—with cheery birthday greetings from Hannah. And lookit here"—she held up a sixth bill. "This here's for you too; one to grow on, see?" She slapped him affectionately in the face. "Oh, you little babydoll! He's got just the sweetest, lovin'est little face in the world."

She put the money in his hand, and his fingers, trembling with emotion, closed around it. "I'll pay back every cent of this, my girl," he said, trying to draw himself erect. "You can lay your bottom dollar on *that*!"

"Now give Hannah a nice big birthday kiss," she said, throwing her arms around him. He kissed her with gusto. "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" he shouted. "Now could I drink hot blood and do such deeds as hell, et cetera!"

"Well, here's *to* you, Tom," said Hannah, taking another drink. She held the bottle to his mouth, tilting it gently as he drank. "Drink it up, little babydoll."

"Or to take arms against a sea of troubles!" he thundered out, gesticulating.

"Now you wait right here," said Hannah, handing him the bottle; "Hannah's gonna run out and get us a nice plump little hen, and—."

"Don't leave me!" he cried, imperiously. "Sit down, and lend ear to my discourse. I'm about to instruct you in regard to a very important matter—."

"Oh, *you!* What you need's to lie down on that bed and take a good sleep till Hannah tells you dinner's ready."

"Let us be seated, gentlemen," he said, in a loud rolling voice, "and engage in friendly discourse." He took an unsteady step to the bed and settled down heavily upon it. Hannah drew a blanket over his legs. "Go to sleep, Tom," she said.

"Blood is thicker'n water," he said.

"Yeah," said Hannah, sitting down beside him, with the bag of peppermints in her lap.

"But *love* is thicker than blood! By which I mean to c'nvey to you, and all of you here assembled, that between Lily and me there was a bond stronger than the ties of blood, stronger than—why, I love Lily better'n I love *God!* For I've never seen God."

"All right, all right," said Hannah. "I believe you, baby."

"No," he said, "you don't comprehend. Now let me instruct you in regard to Lily and me." He got his hands out from under the blanket in order to gesticulate freely. "Now, to bring the matter to concrete form," he said, "suppose that I held in my hand, here before your eyes, a fine, splendid piece of crockery, let us say a Limoges teacup. Yes, very well and good—a Limoges teacup. Now, then, suppose I held it up like this and *crushed* it, right before your eyes! You'd see the broken pieces, wouldn't you? You'd comprehend that the cup was broken, gone, done for—?"

"Well, then," he continued, "now we're getting to the point I wanted to bring up, specifically and to wit: you saw me break the cup, didn't you?"

That is, I told you I broke it!" He paused, bewildered, and shut his eyes sleepily. "Just so!" he shouted, rousing himself. "Just so did I break the bond between Lily and me. I crushed it, and shattered it, with my own hand. And the broken pieces," he added, "have penetrated into my heart!" An expression of ecstatic joy came over his face. "Did you hear that?" he exclaimed. "'Have penetrated into my heart!' Ah, did you hear that, my girl? That was spoken like a poet!"

He buried his face exultantly against Hannah's dressing sacque. "By which I mean to convey," he murmured dreamily, "that I want the perfect gem—the cup, do you see?—the *perfect* gem. Oh, my God, yes, let me have the perfect gem, or nothing at all! Do you comprehend?" he asked Hannah.

"Sure," said Hannah, "I'm right with you, sweetheart." But she was not listening. She had suddenly caught sight of her newly found umbrella, which leaned in the corner by the bureau. "Say!" She clutched his arm and pointed to the umbrella. "That there means good luck, do you know it? How does that go, now—'Find an umbrella, get a new fella!' she chanted. "Do you hear that, baby?"

"She's gone from me forever," he said, taking a peppermint from the bag. "I'll never see her again in this life. But, perhaps, in the hereafter—" he added. "What was that?" he asked. "'The hereafter?'" He laughed uproariously. "The *hereafter*! Look here, my girl," he said, "I want to instruct you in regard to that very matter. Listen to me. There's no future life, you know. Let no one deceive you in regard to that most fundamental matter. No, no!" He looked at her with hilarious blood-shot eyes. "No, you think altogether too much about your conscience, my girl. Forget your conscience! Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, *et cetera*."

"Or is it just the other way 'round?" Hannah asked herself in a hushed voice. "'Find an umbrella, *disaster* will follow!' My God, I believe in my heart that's how it goes. Wait'll I find out!"

She lifted up the bolster and pulled her fortune-book out from under it. "Here we are, baby," she cried, running her finger tempestuously along the index, "Hold on just a minute, baby, and I'll tell you! Umbrella—umbrella—umbrella—."

THE PATTERN THAT GULLS WEAVE

by

William March

THE maid opened the door and Fräulein Mueller came into the reception hall. The ladies were upstairs awaiting their lessons, she said, and Fräulein Mueller was to join them in the library when she had taken off her wraps. Fräulein Mueller nodded her head briskly, in her professional manner. She was a tall, somewhat stout woman, with a puckered mouth and blue eyes which were a little faded. She looked about the room and sighed gently, raising her wide, soft bosom upward, as if she wore a girdle of iron.

"Such bad taste," she sighed, "so much of everything."

Then she stood waiting until the maid had gone away, for she did not like to exhibit her peculiarities to others if she could avoid doing so: it was difficult for Fräulein Mueller to get in motion again, once she had stopped. There was a complete ceremonial through which she must go. First she had to close her eyes and stand perfectly still; then she must raise her hands, as if she were a child unused to standing alone, and balance herself exactly. Almost immediately she would sway forward and then backward for a time or two before her feet began to move with irregular, jerking steps. But when this ceremonial had been completed to the last detail, the mincing gait disappeared and she strode forward rapidly with steps that were long and sure.

Once she had stood outside a room and heard two of her pupils discussing her peculiarity. "She reminds me of a Christmas toy which must be wound up with a key," said one.

"I know," said the other gaily, "I know just what you mean: something that rattles and sways and walks toward you on a table!"

And Fräulein Mueller had stood blushing for shame, but in her heart she knew that the description was just. "They are only young, silly girls," she said to herself. "They do not mean to be unkind." Then she had thought: "There is so much rudeness in the world, so little consideration for others. . . . People were not like that when I was a girl."

But today she mounted the stairs energetically, her step becoming more and more sure. She came into the library smiling. The three young ladies and their mother were awaiting her, grouped about a large table. "Today we must speak only in German!" she said enthusiastically. Then she raised her finger in humorous warning: "Only German today! Only German!"

The young ladies and their mother looked at each other in alarm. Then they glanced down at their open books, their brows puckered in a desperate effort to understand the meaning of the words printed there.

Fräulein Mueller settled back comfortably in her chair: "Today we will take a trip into the country, *nicht*? And will talk about the things we see there. It is summer and we are walking down a country lane. Birds are singing in the trees and everything is green and very beautiful." She turned to the middle daughter: "And now, Fräulein Marjorie, will you begin, please?"

The young lady lifted her book higher, pouted her red lips and began slowly. After a moment she stopped. "I don't understand about the dative," she said. "What is the dative case, Fräulein?"

Fräulein Mueller said: "We won't trouble to learn too much grammar at first. Later, yes; but for the first lessons we will build our vocabulary."

"We don't have a dative case in English," said the oldest of the young ladies.

"Oh yes, yes!" said Fräulein Mueller. "It is the case of the indirect object."

The mother looked up and shook her head in firm, pleasant denial. "My daughter is quite right!" she said, settling the point forever. "There is no dative in English."

"*Bitte!*" said Fräulein Mueller turning to the youngest daughter. "*Bitte*, will you continue, Fräulein Claire?"

When the hour was over, Fräulein Mueller put on her wraps and the maid opened the door for her. For a moment she stood in the doorway adjusting her overshoes.

The sky was gray and overcast and there was fine, cold rain falling. Before her stretched the Alster, misty and unreal. At its edges thin ice had formed and had been broken up into irregular blocks with serrated edges.

Fräulein Mueller walked slowly toward the railing and stood there quietly. Across the lake lights were coming on, but they shone blurred and indistinct through the grayness of the mist-like rain. Then, without reason, a feeling of sadness came over her. She tried to shake it off, to resume her

professional, energetic manner, but she could not. She suddenly felt very helpless and very much alone.

Below her swans were gliding slowly, sullenly, their long throats drawn backward, between the floating pieces of ice; and over them, against the sky, gulls were flying. The gulls wheeled and turned, huddled together in a huge ball, flying inward and outward, upward and downward, intent and silent, their sharp, bright eyes scanning the water, their gray wings beating the gray sky.

Fräulein Mueller watched them for a time, wishing that she had brought bread for their hungry beaks. As she stood there quietly, unconscious of the fine mist-like rain, seeing only the predatory gulls and the sullen swans beneath them, she felt weary and old and without purpose.

Then the quietness of the place was broken. To her left a boy with ragged clothing and a sick, white face stood under a leafless tree, his cap held in his thin, outstretched hand, and began to sing. He knew but one song and he sang it over and over, holding out his cap to the people who passed. But nobody paid any attention to him. They hurried past quickly to their individual destinations, sure of themselves, sure of where they were going and what they were to do. Presently no one passed at all, but the boy sang on and on in his thin voice, the same song over and over.

Suddenly Fräulein Mueller had a strange, unreasoning feeling of anger against the singer; then she went over to him. She opened her pocket-book and fumbled for the money which she had earned that afternoon, dropping it piece by piece into the damp, shabby cap. She spoke with quiet fury to the boy: "Have you no pride? Have you no pride at all?" But the boy looked at her incuriously with calm, remote eyes and went on with his song.

The woman continued in a scolding voice: "You're sick! You shouldn't be out in this weather! You should be at home in bed!" Then she stopped, her anger vanished and she stood looking at the damp earth. "You really *should* wear warmer clothing," she said in a helpless voice. But the boy continued his slow, melancholy song in a voice a little hoarse and a little off key, and did not look at her again.

Fräulein Mueller turned and stood balancing herself with her spread hands, as if she were a ballet dancer about to rise on the tips of her toes. Her body swayed backward and forward a little, and in a moment she walked away mincingly with irregular jerking steps. . . .

Beside her, the swans, the beautiful, helpless swans, blew out their

The Pattern That Gulls Weave

feathers disdainfully and glided among the broken ice; and over her head the gulls wheeled and turned endlessly. They flew upward and downward, inward and outward, whirling and circling eternally with wings that never touched, over and over in the same pattern, seeking food. It was as if each gull had an invisible, colored thread in its beak and was weaving a tapestry against heaven, a design too delicate and too subtly colored for eyes to see, but which would, one day, pull down the skies with its accumulated weight.

Fräulein Mueller buttoned her sensible, shabby coat more closely about her neck. "Food"— she said contemptuously; "food—!" but she could not finish the sentence.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

by

Daniel Fuchs

THE next day Papravel in a double-breasted suit, tab collar and derby, walked into the Silver Eagle bus station. Behind him were a heavy-jowled Irishman called Gilhooley, and Gitler, a dapper, stringy fellow who looked like James Cagney. He had resplendent black hair, plastered down. Hands in pockets, these leaned against the walls of the narrow store, surveyed the steamers advertising round trips to city points, and waited. Behind the ticket counter a stumpy man in suspenders had been talking to a customer but he stopped and looked at the three anxiously, for their brisk entrance had been something of a sensation.

Papravel rapped his fist on the ticket counter with deliberation. "Who is the boss here, please?"

"Yes?" said the stumpy individual. "Yes?"

"Are you Mr. Pomerantz?"

"Morand. My name is Morand. What can I do for you, gentlemen?"

"I'm a representative of the Brownsville Business Board," said Papravel, and thereupon began the comedy. "What we try to do always is not only help business in Brownsville but to help the business man too. Because we always say if the Brownsville business man loses, Brownsville business loses. That's a slogan."

"Yes?" said Mr. Morand, sweating a little. "Yes?"

"When the business man loses, Brownsville's business loses. And now, Mr. Morantz, I don't like to say it, but you made a mistake. Everyone makes a mistake sometimes and what we try to do is to hurry up and help out before it's too late. If you catch it in time, you don't lose everything, and while you still got a shirt on your back, listen to me, Morantz, I know what I'm saying, get out of Brownsville because you can't make money here."

Morand went white. He stared at Gilhooley and Gitler against the wall

and then back again to Papravel. The customer to whom he had been talking grew worried and wondered whether the man wasn't going to have a stroke.

"Who sent you?" Morand said very quietly.

"Who sent me? Listen, Morantz, you don't understand my meaning. I'm your best friend. I mean only to help you. All I'm saying is you'll lose less if you get out of Brownsville now before it's too late."

"Never mind," Morand said rapidly. He drew himself up to indicate that he comprehended the situation and was able to handle it. "I know who sent you and I know who you are. It was Rubin of the Empire Lines who told you to stick your nose in here and your name is Papravel. But listen to me because I mean every word of it. So long as Rubin does an honest business I'll do business honest too, but if he fights with fire I'll strike with fire also. And listen, Papravel, remember, you're not the only louse, the only snout-nose, the only low-life in Brownsville, for every one like you there's a hundred more bumming the streets. And you can tell Rubin for me, you can tell him I said he will burn like in hell before I get out!"

Morand stopped, almost bouncing from the nervous excitement. The customer touched his arm to quiet him. Gitler at the wall stood erect alertly. Gilhooley's eyes absorbed the scene but he continued to lean back. It was a climax and no one could think of anything to say.

"Listen, my friend," began the customer timidly. His voice was very thin. "I don't like to go where I don't belong but let me tell you something. What I say is a man can't be successful unless he's got a warm heart and is willing to give the other fellow a chance."

"Well, what am I saying?" Papravel almost wept at him. "I come to this man like the best friend in the world and I tell him what's good for him. I don't mean harm, all I want is to help. And he gives me a roar like a lion and insults me left and right."

"See," the customer went on with a little more conviction, "I've travelled everywhere, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, everywhere. I always say I don't like to go where I don't belong but maybe I can tell you something and if you like it, take it, and if you don't, just leave it alone and we're still friends."

Gitler now came up. "Mister," he said, taking him by the elbow, "I think your wife wants you outside." Papravel wiped his nose in two movements and returned to Morand.

"Listen, Mr. Morantz, let there be no hard feeling. I wish you all the

by Daniel Fuchs

luck and all the money in the world. Only, if business goes bad, remember, Morantz, I gave you advice and you wouldn't take it."

"Never mind," Mr. Morand said coldly. "Never mind."

"All right," said Papravel, and they went out.

Two Jews, one Negro and three Italians besides Gitler and Gilhooley were the actors in the sequel. As they barged into the Silver Eagle bus station, Gitler walked up to Morand immediately.

"Listen, Morand, and shut up. All you have to do is stay where you are and not make a move. What we will do here, we'll do and it's no good to worry about it. Just stay and wait, but above all things, Morand, keep quiet." He nodded to Gilhooley and returned to the business on hand. The Irishman took his place near Morand.

"Open your yap," he said with seriousness, "and I will knock out every tooth one after the other."

Morand stood as though paralyzed.

The six men proceeded to strip the place bare. They worked with a methodical nonchalance, a business-like coolness, that was particularly disheartening. One of the Italians went behind the counter and with one rip of his monkey wrench unhinged the ticket box. Like a confetti cascade, the blue and pink slips showered to the floor. He smacked the cash register four or five times, wrenched the counter from its supports and took a running swipe at the wall mirrors.

The Negro, elegantly named Fleurie O'Johnson, made a sudden leap for the chandelier. He swung like a monkey the length of the room until it gave, dropping him on the floor with a loud boom. O'Johnson rubbed his behind and looked up ruefully at the hole in the ceiling. Gitler, supervising the job from the side, laughed in amusement.

"That reminds me," he reflected pleasantly, "did you ever go to the zoo? Once I saw a baboon and he had no hair on his can at all."

"Why?" Gilhooley wanted to know, perplexed. What was the point?

"Why?" repeated Gitler, discountenanced with the failure of his effort. "Why? Kiss my tail, why. How should I know?"

The Italian with the monkey wrench, in the meantime, was walking around cracking windows, wall fixtures and signs. Morand's hands moved once but Gilhooley caught his eyes and he returned to frozen attention. But when they started to rip the rich, red carpet on the floor, Morand could con-

tain himself no longer. He opened his mouth to protest but simultaneously the Irishman brought up his palm stiffly against it. Gilhooley slapped his face repeatedly and he did it with passion. "Enough," Gitler finally called out. "How long, how long, you dumb Irisher?" In the recess Morand drew in his breath, broke down completely and cried with extravagance. There is something ugly about physical violence in addition to its other displeasing qualities.

The Italian with the monkey wrench paused and wiped his forehead.

Like a thread of chewing gum a child stretches from her mouth in idle play, the state road dipped its dainty way through the hills. The morning sun beamed down in yellow brightness cheering the countryside. Through the quiet roared the huge Empire Lines bus on its way to Havers Falls. Nature and power. God's majesty and Rubin's.

"Already," said Rubin, speaking almost poetically, "the railroads are giving in. Yesterday they cut their rates again and still they can't touch Empire fares."

Paprael lay contentedly against the over-upholstered cushions. Expansively he smoked a cigar because it always gave him a sensation of opulence even though it frequently made him sick in the stomach.

"It's America," he said softly, his eyes almost closed. "Where but in America could a man do so well for himself?"

"When we began," Rubin continued, full of honest enthusiasm, "the railroads, they said we were a bunch of snout-noses, we would be thrown on our behinds in six months. You should have heard them, Paprael. Big speeches. Big shots. Big bellies with cigars all the time stuck in their faces. 'Transportation is the backbone of the Nation.' 'American industry and American imagination will find no serious rival in foreign competition.' Now they come to me and give me Mr. Rubin, Mr. Rubin, until I tell Louie, Louie throw these bums out, they're taking up my time." Mr. Rubin laughed. In harmony, Paprael smiled pleasantly.

"Listen to me, Paprael, and I'll show you how a man can work himself up in this country. Four years ago I was a jobber in candy. I made fifty dollars a week, sometimes sixty, sometimes seventy, it all depends. I worked like a nigger but I thought I was rich like Herbert Hoover and Charlie Schwab. And now look at me, knock wood. President, Empire Lines, Inc., with regular service to the mountains five times a day in the summer and twice daily

in the winter with a connection in a coast-to-coast hook-up. Fourteen Superba buses, seven Nashes and four Buicks, four offices and a pay-roll of sixty-six. And it is just the beginning.

"Four lines there are to Havers Falls: The Empire, The Green Hawk, The Excellent and The Silver Eagle. The Green Hawk is a fancy outfit operated by goyish dopes, catering to Gentiles strictly and tell me, Papravel, how many Gentiles come to the mountains? They'll go out of business the first bad summer but it's all the same to me. As for the Excellent, did you ever hear what happened? It's a funny story. Moss and Reinhardt were partners until one day Moss says he's got enough, he wants to get out. And who buys him out, Papravel? So all's that's left is the Silver Eagle and now with God's will and your help they will move out of Brownsville and without a station in Brownsville they, too, can't hurt me."

Rubin stopped. It was a long speech but he had relished every word of it. His cigar had gone out and now Rubin took time to relight it with the importance that this operation alone makes possible.

"Yes, yes," said Papravel, awakening from his mild slumber. "Did you hear what happened to the Silver Eagle, Rubin? Eight bandits, eight bums, eight low-lives, the rottenest kind of people in the world, you and I should never have anything to do with them, they walked into the bus station. With no pity, no heart, they knock down the furniture, rip the carpets and smash up the place. And poor Morantz, he comes running to me. I swear to him, Morantz, I'm no rough-neck, it isn't my business, why should he come to me? I think he will have to get out of Brownsville after all."

Rubin looked sideways at the innocence of Papravel. They rocked gently with the motion of the bus. It was a pleasant sensation.

"Poor Morantz," Rubin sighed. He leaned back, grew lost in thought while the smoke rose and circled in the bus. With the Excellent crippled and the Silver Eagle out of Brownsville a man could make in the summer, let me see, eight hundred, nine hundred dollars a day. Maybe a thousand. Rubin crossed his legs. One thousand dollars! If God would only be good.

Through the window could be seen the lifting dew now rising in mist from the fields. A vari-colored cow, taking no time from her chewing and looking no less stupid for it, stared dumbly at the speeding bus. What hath God wrought? The hills extending upwards on either side revealed squares of blue, green and yellow acres. Now the sun had grown richer, resembling the yolk of an egg medium-boiled. Far off came the shrill whistle of a speed-

ing train. Rubin awoke abruptly from his reverie. "Hey, Mike!" he commanded the driver. "Press the button!" Through the still air in answer sounded the soft melodious note of the bus horn and it floated above the car like a plume. . . .

The arrival at Havers Falls was like cold water. The news greeted them from Brownsville that Morand, determined to fight, had reopened with the help of a Detroit combination. Rubin was stunned. He had begun to regard the business as finished. After all, he had a wife and four children.

"Listen, Rubin," Papravel said, speaking carefully and slowly, "trust me and everything will be all right. Don't cry like a baby. Your place in Brownsville I guarantee they won't touch. Every day I'll have three men to watch it with more waiting near a telephone. And as for Morantz's place, leave that to me. Not in a month did I learn my business and only God knows how many ways there are to make trouble. Import! Let Morantz import gangsters from today until tomorrow. What difference does it make if a bum comes from Detroit, Chicago or New York? He's still a stinker and let there be an end to it."

Half way between Middletown and Utseck they stopped the screaming Silver Eagle bus. Two Jews, one Negro, three Italians. The driver, a big man with long arms that went down to his knees, leaped out ready for a fight but stopped short when he saw the guns.

"All right," he said. "What's the game?"

"Shut your mouth," Gilhooley said and the first thing he did was to pull down the driver's pants so that he couldn't move his legs. In the early morning the cool air struck him disagreeably and the driver protested. "Shut your mouth!" Gilhooley said.

It was an early mid-week trip and there were few passengers. However Gitler went through the car to calm them. "Gentlemen," he announced, "everything is all right, keep your seats and stay quiet. Because if anyone makes noise it will certainly go hard with him." He sat down in the driver's seat, one eye on the passengers, the other surveying the work his men were doing. . . .

Neatly and rapidly they slashed the big expensive shoes, knocked holes in the gasoline tank, lifted the shift cover and smashed the teeth of the gears, raised the hood and crumpled the fan, ripped the wires from their places, wrenched the spark-plugs and banged the magneto. Then they

dropped everything, piled back into the Nashes and rode off. As they went down the road the driver with the long arms, still dazed by their speed, forgot to pull up his pants but looked after them. "The dirty bastards," he said quietly, in a sort of astonishment recollected in tranquillity. "The dirty bastards."

In the evening Papravel got Morand on the long distance telephone. "Morantz," he said, "this is from a friend. You know what happened a week ago in Brownsville. About this morning with the bus I don't have to tell you. Listen to me, I'm talking like a father, get out of Brownsville because it's no good for you."

"Who's talking? Who's talking?" Morand's cracked voice came through the earpiece.

"What difference does it make who's talking, Morantz? It's the best friend you got in the world. Listen to me, get out and get out in a hurry. Because all that's happened already is only the beginning and if you keep on being stubborn, may Heaven help you."

"I know who it is, you cut-throat!" the voice screamed. "I want you to know this and I'll say it with the last breath in my body. I'm no ninny, I'm not afraid. I'll fight you and Rubin with my last penny and I'll fight you until I'm in my grave, may you rot in hell. May your bones be twisted in their sockets, may your eyes be screwed to the back of your skull, may God strike you with a bolt of lightning! Till I'm dead and buried in my grave will I fight you, and tell Rubin for me, tell him may his belly foster cancers and ulcers, may his tongue grow swollen and hang from his mouth like a beard, may a subway train run over his stinking body, goddammit!"

From the other end came the sharp click. Papravel hung up. "Goddammit yourself!" he bellowed at the telephone, and then it was he first began to grow angry with Morand.

Moreover, Morand meant what he said, for that night his men broke into the Empire Havers Falls's office. They wrecked it with a thoroughness and regard for detail that equalled in every respect the work of Papravel. Rubin howled. He was tremendously scared. Papravel brushed him aside impatiently.

"I'm busy," he said. "Don't worry. In the end everything will be all right." Papravel wired instructions home, left Gitler and Gilhooley in the mountains and drove to Brownsville.

Gitler and Gilhooley drove through the mountains looking for trouble. Two Jews, one Negro and three Italians. By this time Morand was sending a Detroit gunman with every bus and they had to work carefully because Papravel's orders were to stay clear of the cops. Gitler's boys had to pick their spots, swiftly punching holes in gas tanks or slashing shoes, and then they had to duck out immediately. Morand's help retaliated in kind so that Gitler was compelled to split his men, half protecting, half attacking. He sent telegrams home asking for more men and he got them.

From Brownsville came great news. Papravel had managed one night to get into the garage where Morand kept his buses. With the dispatch and completeness that were the trade-mark of Papravel's organization, his men put the big cars out of commission. So skilfully did they work that for a day and a half Morand had no cars on the road and his schedule was thrown awry for a week. The damage to Morand was terrific but he held on.

Through it all Rubin groaned. He was frightened to his marrow and cursed the hot day he had begun with Papravel. Papravel pointed to his swelling army and called for more money, more money.

"You're sucking me dry," Rubin wept. "I ask you for one little job and you grow on me like a wife. There is finally a limit. A man can't go on like this forever."

"Give in," Papravel argued relentlessly. "You can't afford to back out now. They'll walk off with your pants if you quit now in the middle. Give in."

Papravel got his money, for it was true Rubin could not get out at this stage. Mrs. Van Curen alone was overjoyed. She was the shriveled little lady who owned the place where Papravel boarded the boys in the mountains. She was a pious old woman, but that is natural for people her age. Nevertheless, when Papravel had offered her twenty dollars a day for the men, she thought the sky had fallen out of the heavens. So Mrs. Van Curen alone was overjoyed because for every new man Papravel sent up she got an additional two dollars. He was her benefactor, a straight stalwart man who honestly paid his bills and would never cheat an old woman. Even though he was a Jew, it would be hard to find a better man.

It was as abrupt as that. In mid-August Gilhooley failed to restrain himself, forgot Papravel's strict orders and ended up by seriously wounding a state trooper. With him hooliganism was no colorless business adjunct but a

career appropriate to a sporting temperament. Gitler found him at the Van Curen house, surrounded by the other boys who silently gazed at the Irishman now weakly proclaiming his courage and defiance. Gitler smelled the odor of gin and wanted to slap his face right then and there.

"When Papravel gave you a gun," he said coldly, "he meant you should only use it to scare. But if you had to shoot somebody, why, Gilhooley, why did you have to pick a state trooper?"

Gilhooley, heavy with drunkenness, nevertheless had begun to comprehend the seriousness of the situation. The blustering expression on his face had been cracking and revealing his fear. Gitler considered and he considered hard. The proper move for him was to get away before he was mixed into the mess. But Papravel, Papravel. . . . Through the darkness came the gleam of Papravel for a consolation.

"Say something," Gilhooley commanded and glared around at the men. But everyone remained mute. "Say something," he pleaded. Slowly as a shadow comes, his face filled with sadness and self-pity. "Say something," Gilhooley begged. "Say something!" And in another moment he was crying broken-heartedly. . . .

It was in this crisis that the true quality of Papravel was revealed. A lesser man might have been inclined, like Gitler, to clear out, but to Papravel the emergency presented a challenge to his energy and resourcefulness, and if Papravel had anything it was a vast confidence in himself. Besides, it was alien to his nature to leave Gilhooley stuck, for Papravel was essentially a simple man.

Nevertheless he roundly bawled out the Irishman for his want of business sense. Gilhooley, who resembled in the excitement a man with a heavy nose-cold, stared dumbly, accepting abuse and asking monotonously, "What'll I do? What'll I do?" In disgust Papravel sent him back to Brownsville to get him out of sight while he sounded the situation.

He went directly to Rubin. "Remember, Rubin," he said gingerly, "remember long ago I told you sometimes mistakes happen? Well, a terrible mistake happened, and now we've got to help."

"No!" said Rubin with finality. He was blown up with resentment. "No! Once for all I made my mind up. No! For two months you've bled me until I'm sucked dry. Let Morantz have his bus station in Brownsville. It's cheaper."

"The bus station is all finished, Rubin," Papravel said impatiently. "The Silver Eagle won't be there another month. About this, I told you, I'm posi-

tive. Don't be stubborn now, because if you wanted to be stubborn this is the worst time you could pick."

"No!" Rubin's voice rose to a wail from persecution. "Every night I ask myself, why did I ever get mixed up with you? You've never done me any good, you've been like a leech on my flesh. Not another cent will I give, Papravel, and you can know it right now. These things can't go on forever and let there be an end to it!"

In the face of this unexpected resistance, Papravel sharply changed his tactics.

"An end?" he repeated, with terrible calm.

"Cut-throat!" screamed Rubin. He was enormously afraid. "Get out, you robber! I'm an honest business man and won't have dealings with gangsters like you."

"Don't call names," said Papravel imperturbably. "It won't do any good. Besides, have you already forgotten the little business you ran twenty years ago when you told the poor yiddles in the old country what a wonderful place America was? And then when they came over you put them to work in sweat shops for four dollars a week and took a commission on their wages? You even took the dumbbells to board in a railroad flat with no windows and the toilet in the backyard so you could make more money on them. You're no rabbi yourself, Rubin, and from candy-jobbing alone a man doesn't make a fortune. But what will be, will be. Only, listen Rubin, there is no end yet because I'm coming back."

"Get out, blood-sucker!" screamed Rubin. But already his whole body was wet with the sweat of fear.

However, in this time of stress, Papravel's first concern was for Gilhooley. From Brownsville appeared Anschele B. Sussman, and concerning him the legend as a lawyer was great. He was a stoutish man whose shirt tails were always coming out in folds through his vest, and in some neighborhoods this is a mark of importance. From the way in which he shoved the cloth back into place within his trousers, one could perceive Sussman's satisfaction with himself, his confidence in his ability and his pleasure with his growing fame and fortune. He was an energetic man. Rubin could have chosen none better.

A short time after Sussman's arrival, three nondescript individuals came upon the scene. These were the witnesses who affirmed with the conviction

of solid truth behind them that while it was true Gilhooley shot, it was only after the policeman had drawn his own revolver and was on the point of killing the Irishman. Further, the trooper seemed intoxicated, although of course at the time there was no certain way of knowing. And this seemed reasonable, they were ready to swear, for there was no cause for the trooper to become involved with Gilhooley otherwise.

Skilfully, and from experience, Sussman was bringing his case to completion. And it was only when the prospect grew brighter, when the judge who was to preside had been shown the light, when the prosecution had been tactfully approached, it was only then that Papravel returned to Rubin. With inordinate calm Papravel baldly proposed that Rubin resign, accept the position of vice-president, and transfer his office together with two-thirds of the stock to Papravel. Rubin had a stroke.

When he recovered, Papravel presented his inexorable argument.

"Give in, Rubin, while you still have a shirt on your back. You know what I did for Morand and the Silver Eagle, and the same party will be in stock for you if you take it into your head to get nasty. Fourteen Superba buses, seven Nashes and Buicks, four offices and sixty-six on the pay-roll, all this you will lose like a dream going away in the morning. And from you personally I will make such a sight for all Brownsville to talk about for a month."

Rubin made gasping noises as though he were choking. His face was shot with blood.

"On the other hand," Papravel went on with marvelous presence, even for him, "with me as your partner you'll have nothing to worry about. All your competitors I'll drive away from the mountains and we'll expand. I'll make the railroads give up altogether and make them carry only freight. I'll establish for you routes to all the big cities and I'll chase every other company from the roads. You'll have, with me for a partner, not a stinking small business to the mountains but a coast-to-coast organization. Listen, Rubin, you'll be a big man with your picture in the papers every Sunday. You'll be a philanthropist like Warburg and Kahn and you'll do good wholesale. They'll name orphan asylums after you and hospitals, and when you die, Rubin, you'll get a funeral that will never be seen before in America!"

And Papravel won.

Outside, the full-starred sky resembled a huge ceiling in a Brooklyn bur-

lesque house. The summer was already leaving and in the coolness of the mountain air could be discerned that gentle sad quality of autumn. But Mrs. Van Curen had the big living-room all alit, the boys half sat, half lay in the chairs, every one smoked cigars. Peace. Quiet. Contentment.

"Listen, boys," said Papravel from a full heart and with satisfaction, "it's a party. Tonight we celebrate because all that comes, knock wood, is good news. Morantz, he's quit Brownsville and soon I'll have him out altogether, give me a year and God's help. As for Gilhooley, let no one say Papravel doesn't take care of his boys right, for Sussman here has everything fixed. And just this morning the railroad company sent out an announcement they take no more passengers, only freight. And it is the beginning, because there is still a God over America."

Papravel interrupted his monologue long enough to relight the cigar. The boys were by this time almost asleep but Mrs. Van Curen was watching him intently, listening with respect. As he held the match in his fingers Papravel abruptly grew serious.

"America," he proclaimed with profound conviction, through the smoke. "I don't care what anybody says, America is a wonderful country. Seriously, seriously! Look at me, look how I worked myself up in four short years. In America everyone has an equal chance. I don't know how it is in Russia now, God himself doesn't know what goes on there, but even so, where, I want to know, where else could a Jew make such a man of himself as right here in America?"

Papravel stopped, his eyes waiting for an answer. But in the pause Mrs. Van Curen suddenly took it into her head to cry. She was very sleepy and wept noiselessly but with many tears.

"What's the matter?" Papravel asked, concerned. "What's the old lady crying about?"

Mrs. Van Curen looked up sadly. "I'm crying because you're such a fine, upstanding, kind gentleman and yet when you die you won't go to heaven."

"Why?" Papravel asked. "Why should you say a thing like that?"

"You've never been baptized, Mr. Papravel," she wept.

"Oh," said Papravel, with relief. "Don't you worry your little gray head over that." He didn't know whether this was a joke or what. "Just you leave this to me, Mrs. Van Curen, and everything will be all right," Papravel said, and he smiled happily.

HOME IS WHERE YOU HANG YOUR CHILDHOOD

by

Leane Zugsmith

ALGEBRA made Ellie stop thinking, and French mixed her up when she had to make sentences out of the nice-sounding words. But she was simply crazy about History and English. She sat all the way back on the street car bench and leaned her head against the window-pane and began to count up all the things she was most crazy about. Going to high school and back on the street car was one, and having her thirteenth birthday in one month and twenty days and living only a block from Roy Carmody, and staying up until nine every week day evening, and Father, and Gin, her only sister. Goodness, she thought, Father and Gin really came first. She pulled at her short skirt and coat and looked around the car to see if any one could have read her thoughts.

Presently Ellie hurried to the front of the car, so that she could get off at 40th instead of 41st and pass by Roy Carmody's house. She did it every school day, if it wasn't raining. After she got off, she looked first left and right to see if any autos were coming, before she ran to the sidewalk.

The awfully uncomfortable but kind of nice feeling hit her as she came nearer to his house. If he came out and down the steps, as he had once in his football suit, she was afraid she wouldn't be able to act as if she hadn't passed by on purpose. Goodness knew she couldn't talk to him the way she planned even when she had a chance to, like the one time he took her to Mrs. Grove's Dancing Class Saturday night, and she hadn't been able to say a word. Ellie felt perspiry, thinking of that evening and all the things she had meant to say and her new light-blue taffeta which Father let her have specially for it; only nothing had made any difference, she just couldn't say a word. Naturally, he wouldn't want to ask out a lump like that, ever again.

Still, Ellie felt kind of thankful that he didn't come out as she passed by his house.

"Hello," she said to Everett, the elevator man in the apartment-hotel,

where they had been living since Father started the divorce. "Are any of my folks in?"

"They're all still out," he said, stopping at her floor.

Sure enough, Everett was right; the three-room suite had no one in it. She looked out of the window to see if she wanted to go roller-skating but it was already getting too dark to make it worth going down. Hanging up her coat and hat, she remembered all of a sudden that she had hidden part of a Baby Ruth in her handkerchief box. She got it out and found the latest Motion Picture Classic, with which she curled up on the sofa.

Just as she was about to go into the bathroom and try to fix her hair the way Norma Shearer did in the magazine picture, the door opened. It was Miss Purdy. Ellie quickly licked her lips so that no chocolate would show and they wouldn't think she was being selfish.

"Hasn't she brought Gin?" said Miss Purdy. She was out of breath.

"Who?" said Ellie, surprised. Every afternoon, Gin, who was going on six, went with Miss Purdy to the park, where she filled up her sand pail with acorns and brought back the acorns to put in the bottom drawer of the bureau. The drawer was so full of acorns now it wouldn't close any longer.

"Oh, Mercy," said Miss Purdy and sat down as if she were exhausted. "I would feel better if she were here. She called up—Mrs. Leonard, your mother, I'm talking about—just after lunch and said she was in town for the afternoon and wanted to see both of you. So I said you were still at school." She paused for breath and then said in a whisper: "Oh, Mercy."

Not school, *high school*, thought Ellie; only Miss Purdy never saw the difference. "Then what?" she said.

Miss Purdy drew a deep breath. "So she said to bring Gin down to Wanamaker's and, of course, I did. We met on the Market Street side and there was such a crowd I thought it was a bad place to take Gin, there's so much flu around, but her own mother ought to know. So Mrs. Leonard said we should go shopping and when we got to the glove counter, she was trying on those new velvet gloves and suddenly she said to me that I could help her by matching her sample with silk at the notions and then we could go to Huyler's." Miss Purdy stopped and began to unbutton her coat, shaking her head all the time. "They'll probably be here any minute, though," she said.

"Did you go to Huyler's?" asked Ellie, feeling less guilty about the Baby Ruth bar.

"That's just it!" said Miss Purdy, stopping with her coat only half off.

"When I came back to the gloves, neither of them was there. Really Ellie, I combed that store and there was such a crowd, I don't know what I'd do if Gin caught a cold from it."

"It is awfully funny," said Ellie. "Maybe Mother and Gin were there all the time and you just didn't see them on account of the crowd."

"I *couldn't* have missed them at the gloves, Ellie. I ought to know. But I do wish they'd come."

"Wouldn't it be awful if Mother didn't know how to get here? She never has been here, only that's silly," said Ellie, "because she knows the address. She always takes taxis, anyway. Maybe Gin had to go somewhere and Mother was up there with her when you were looking."

"I hope so," said Miss Purdy nervously, as she went into the next room. "I forgot," she called in, "she sent you a ring."

"A ring!" Ellie jumped up. "Where is it?"

It was wrapped in tissue paper, inside Miss Purdy's pocket-book.

"It's the one with the sapphire she wore on her little finger!" Ellie put it on and held up her hand with admiration. "It fits me perfectly." It made her feel extremely grown-up to be able to wear Mother's ring without even stringing a piece of ribbon in back to make it fit. "I didn't think she was going to."

Ellie returned to her magazine but she couldn't stop thinking about the ring because she wasn't used to feeling it on her finger. She thought she might stop wearing a glove on her left hand, anyway, when she passed Roy Carmody's house. Then if she could also get her hair to look like Norma Shearer's. . . .

"I'm worried sick, Ellie." Miss Purdy sat down with a basket of stockings to be mended. "It's dark out and it's beginning to rain and you know your father will be back any minute. If only the telephone would ring."

Ellie looked up. She wished Gin's governesses didn't always have such nerves. Miss Purdy was loads better than Miss Scrope but she was beginning to make her feel spooky. Suppose Mother missed Gin so much that she had decided, all of a sudden, to keep her all the time. Ellie couldn't blame her because, even with her first teeth falling out, Gin was so pretty and so cute. It would be a relief, she thought, to have the phone ring, only wouldn't it be terrible if it turned out to be Roy Carmody asking her to the Boys' High basketball game? Because she would have to be ashamed of being glad that

it was Roy Carmody instead of Mother and Gin. Ellie sighed. Miss Purdy looked up with long wrinkles between her eyes.

Presently there were footsteps near the door. Ellie jumped up. It was Father, with raindrops shining on his derby and long dark-blue overcoat.

"Hello, dear," he said, bending down to kiss her.

"I thought you were Gin," said Ellie. She gave him a big hug. "We're worried about her."

Miss Jurdy stood up unhappily.

"Gin?" said Father sharply, standing just where he was. "What's wrong?"

"Mrs. Leonard came to town and I took Gin down to Wanamaker's and then I couldn't find them. It happened this way, Mrs.—"

"Oh, God damn her! I knew it!" Father banged the flat of his hand against the door and then swung it to with a more awful bang.

"They'll be back, Father," said Ellie, grabbing his arm. "They'll be back any minute, you know how Mother is about time."

Father drew away his arm. "Start at the beginning and tell it quickly," he said to Miss Purdy, his voice hard.

Miss Purdy rattled off the story, leaving out the crowds and the flu this time, so she wouldn't have an extra sin on her conscience. At the end, Father pushed off his derby and sat down. "She's taken her," he said heavily. "I might have known."

Miss Purdy put her hand up to her mouth.

"Maybe they're still at Huyler's," said Ellie, standing by the closed door.

Father didn't answer. His expression looked as if he were trying to learn Algebra.

"I could call up Huyler's," said Ellie.

"She's probably killed her by now. She was always going to kill herself, maybe she wanted to take along one of the kids with her." He put his head down on his hands.

Ellie picked at the hem of her middy blouse. Even her toes felt cold. Miss Purdy tiptoed out of the room, her hand still up at her mouth, but Father kept his head bent down. Ellie thought she would die if Father was crying.

"Father." She cleared her throat, scared that he would look up and she would *see* him doing it. "They might be at Mrs. Bates'. Couldn't I call up Mrs. Bates?"

"That's an idea." He looked up quickly, with his face red and funny, only his eyes weren't wet. Then he went to the telephone, but his fingers got mixed up with the pages of the telephone book. He let Ellie find the number for him.

Mrs. Bates hadn't seen them. Then he called up the Bensingers but nobody answered the phone. He even tried Adelaide Shannon but she said she hadn't even known Mother expected to come to town. The Judds weren't in the book.

Father sat down again on the couch and stared ahead of him. Ellie could tell how terrible she felt because she tested it out by thinking of Roy Carmody and it didn't make her feel the least bit better.

Presently Father said: "You see, she's covered her tracks. Crazy people know what to do." He took out a cigarette which he didn't light, but turned around and around between his fingers.

"Maybe she really is at one of her friends and told them not to tell," said Ellie.

Father looked at her quickly. "That's an idea," he said. "We'll go to all of them. We'll go to every single person she might know in the city." He stood up. "Not the police," he said, half to himself.

Ellie didn't know why she all of a sudden felt like crying. She put on her coat and hat, without looking in the mirror. Miss Purdy was in the room, looking out of the window. She didn't ask Ellie where she was going.

When they got out in the hall, Ellie started ahead of Father toward the elevators. "Let's walk down the stairs," said Father, pulling at her arm. "I don't want to see anybody. They probably heard it all, anyway."

Ellie went down the stairs with him and hurried through the foyer and out to the street. She had forgotten that it was raining but she didn't want to ask Father to turn back for an umbrella. As they went towards the corner, Father slipped on the rainy pavement. He dropped to one knee but caught himself from falling farther.

"This had to happen, too," he said in a sneering kind of voice.

The street car was crowded but they got two seats together on the side, after a while. They were going to the Judds, first. Father didn't talk, and Ellie was just wondering what to concentrate on when somebody said: "Good evening." She looked up to find Roy Carmody, hanging on the strap right in front of her.

"Evening, Mr. Leonard," he said also.

Father didn't even answer or look up.

"Hello," said Ellie. "I didn't see you on the car."

"I didn't see you either," he said, grinning. He had to lean down toward her, he was quite big for sixteen. "It's certainly a night for cats and dogs," he said.

Ellie looked up at him, but she didn't know what to say. She couldn't talk about basketball or the movies, with Father sitting there so still he wasn't even wiggling his foot the way he usually did. She couldn't say, we're going to every single person Mother knows in the city to try to find my little sister, Gin.

"Going far?" said Roy Carmody, his voice kind of formal.

Ellie looked up at him again. She caught her under lip with her teeth and nodded her head up and down. Then, without warning, the tears sprang out. She couldn't even stop nodding her head up and down, which made the tears spurt out all the faster. Then she made herself keep her head down and fooled around in her coat pocket for a handkerchief.

"Well, guess I get off here," he said.

She kept her head down and didn't answer. Pretty soon the handkerchief was sopped so she wiped her face against Father's overcoat shoulder. He didn't move, sitting there all hunched up. Only she stopped feeling like crying and by the time they were at the Judds', she felt much calmer than Father.

No one answered the bell at the Judds'. They kept on ringing until one of the neighbors asked them to go away, and then another one poked out her head and said they had gone to Maryland to visit his uncle. After that they took a bus to Adelaide Shannon's. She was home but she hadn't seen Mother. Father didn't tell Adelaide that he was looking for Gin, really, so it took a long time for him to question her without telling her everything.

It was the same at the Bensingers', only just when they were walking toward the door, Father thought he recognized Mother's hat on the hatrack. Mrs. Bensinger told him Mother had given it to their colored girl over a year ago and reminded him of how she had visited them then. But Father insisted they get the colored girl in and he questioned her and finally believed her, so they left.

The cook at Mrs. Bates' told them that Mrs. Bates was spending the evening with some friends way over on the south side. It took two street cars to get there. Mrs. Bates' friends were having a party, the windows were all

lighted up. Father and Ellie stood in the vestibule a long time, talking to her. Presently, Father followed Mrs. Bates into the sitting-room. Ellie knew he was only going in to see if Mother was there, so she asked if she could go to the bathroom when she didn't have to at all.

Upstairs she peeked all around the rooms to see if Mother and Gin were hiding, but she couldn't even find anything that looked as if it belonged to them. As she went down the stairs, she heard a lot of loud talking and laughing and saw a maid pass through the hall with a tray of food that made Ellie's stomach quiver. Father came out with Mrs. Bates and said goodbye to her and walked out, with Ellie following. The rain had stopped but it had become colder. Right there on the stoop, Ellie stopped and knew, all of a sudden, that they couldn't find them and it seemed so late and so cold and her stomach was rumbling.

"I don't think it's any use, Father," she said in a low voice. Slowly, dragging each foot, she went down the steps. She leaned against Father, standing on the pavement.

"You poor kid," he said, putting his arm around her, "you must be dead. We should have taken a taxi, but we will now."

Inside the taxi, Ellie sat on her hands to warm them. "But there isn't any, is there, Father?" she said, shaking her head. "Use, I mean."

"You can't tell, maybe she's home right now."

"You mean maybe Mother brought her right after we left and Miss Purdy didn't know how to get us?"

"That's the idea," said Father. "She might be asleep right at this minute."

Miss Purdy was sitting under the bridge lamp with the darning basket on her lap. She grabbed the basket and stood up when Father and Ellie came in. Only she didn't have to say anything because all the questions were in her expression. As she hurried out of the room, Ellie followed her and whispered: "Not even a call?"

Miss Purdy shook her head and resumed her seat at the window in the next room.

Father had his hat and coat off and looked awfully tired. "Why don't you go to bed, Father?" said Ellie, trying to conceal a yawn.

"And sleep?" Father made a sound a little like laughter, only the kind you can't laugh with. "Particularly in there." He inclined his head toward

Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood

his room and Ellie realized, for the first time, how terrible it was going to be for him in there, because Gin slept in the small single bed in there. They had to double up that way because they couldn't afford a four-room suite, and Ellie was too old to sleep in the same room with Father.

"Couldn't I sleep in Gin's bed just for tonight?" she said. "We wouldn't need to tell anybody."

Father almost really laughed this time. Then he said solemnly: "I wish you would."

"That's settled, then." Ellie went into the room she shared with Miss Purdy. She was kind of sorry she had eaten up all of the Baby Ruth; only if Father didn't think of eating, she guessed she could hold out.

She was careful to brush her teeth and wash her face and even comb out her hair. Then she got into Gin's bed but didn't turn out the lights. When Father came in, he threw himself on the bedspread without even thinking of his good gray suit. Presently he reached out his hand.

"Hold my hand, Ellie, will you?" he said.

Reaching out for his hand, Ellie thought she was being kind of a lump all over again. She couldn't think of what to say to take his mind off things. She looked all around the room to keep from looking over at him, since she couldn't talk, and then she saw the bottom bureau drawer that wouldn't close any more because it was so full of the acorns that Gin picked up in the park every day. Ellie pressed Father's hand very hard and looked over at him. Then she saw his eyes fall on the drawer that wouldn't close because of Gin's acorns. He let go her hand and turned over on his face.

In the morning, Father yelled out awfully in his sleep. It scared Ellie so much that she slid down under the covers. But when she realized that it was Father from whom those terrible yells were coming, she pushed back the covers and called him very loud and pushed at his shoulder. She had to shake him like fury to wake him up and even then it seemed like ages before he opened his eyes and said, "What?" in a sleepy voice and then: "Oh." Now he was awake enough to sit up on the edge of the bed in his mussed-up gray suit. He started to doze there, leaning his head in his hands.

Ellie thought she would never get back to sleep again; she still felt scared even though she knew it had only been Father having a bad dream. Only she did go to sleep and knew it because the ring of the door bell woke her up. Miss Purdy was already at the door in her coolie coat by the time

Father and Ellie got there. It was a telegram, which Father snatched from the boy, and it was from Grandmother White in Cleveland, Mother's mother, reading: "Lola and Gin arrived safe 7:11."

Father called up Cleveland right away and talked angrily to Grandmother White and worse to Mother and nicely to Gin. He let Ellie talk to Gin, at the end. Gin sounded sleepy and said: "I've got a doll that comes with a bathtub."

After she hung up, Ellie hugged Father. "Isn't it lovely, everything's all right now, isn't it?" she said.

"Yes." His voice sounded funny. Then he asked Miss Purdy to find out the next train he could catch for Cleveland.

Ellie followed him into his room and looked straight at the drawer of acorns without getting a bad feeling. "Can I pack for you, Father?" she said.

"That's an idea," said Father.

"What should I put in?"

He lit a cigarette and then held it in his hand. "What?" he said, finally.

"Socks and shirts and what else?" Ellie was on all fours, trying to pull out Father's grip from under the bed.

"She took Gin because she wants money," he said.

Miss Purdy knocked at the open door. "There's an eleven:ten, Mr. Leonard," she said.

"Thanks."

Ellie put in lots of socks and five shirts and B. V. D.'s. She was choosing her favorite ties when Father said: "She wants the grounds changed, and alimony. Then she'll sign a paper that she'll never steal either of you kids again." He made a clucking sound with his tongue.

"Well," said Ellie, with the blue-and-green tie in her hand, "anyway, you can get Gin right away, can't you?"

"Yes," he said in the gloomiest voice, "that's something."

By the time Father was ready to leave, Ellie had given up hope that she would be invited to go along. Father kissed her goodbye and told her to write every day, but he never said a word to Miss Purdy. Ellie felt kind of bad about Miss Purdy who looked as if she knew she would be fired as soon as he got back. She thought of asking Miss Purdy if she wanted to take a walk, it being Saturday and no school. But it was so sunshiny outside that she wanted more to roller-skate, so she just said: "I'll be back long before lunch,"

in a friendly voice to show Miss Purdy that she didn't think it was all her fault.

Outside she put on her roller-skates and stuck the skate-key in her coat pocket. Then she started toward Roy Carmody's house. It was always the first place she skated by. She had been skating that Saturday morning when he came out all dressed up in his football clothes.

Just before she reached the curb at 41st Street, she remembered. She coasted to the telegraph pole and held on to it, remembering how terrible it had been when she had cried right in front of Roy Carmody on the street car. She gripped the telegraph pole with such intensity that a splinter entered the palm of her hand. As she looked at it, she noticed the ring. Goodness, she hadn't even thought of it all this time. She had been going to show it off when she passed Roy Carmody's house. Only what was the use of the ring now? She could never look him in the face again. She would never pass by his house. She would get off the street car at 41st instead of 40th, every school day afternoon. Everything was different now, she thought, and sat down right where she was to take off her skates. She carried them by their straps and walked back to the apartment-hotel. She could take out the splinter upstairs.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

by

Isaac Bein

MR. SAMUEL GOLDSTEIN, who sells men's and women's clothing, furniture and jewelry on the installment plan, is sending out Christmas cards to his customers. He is sitting in the dining-room of his warm and comfortable flat. Across the table from him sits his daughter Adele who does his book-keeping. Adele, a high school girl of sixteen, is addressing the envelopes. She writes with her left hand; her right flies to her ear every minute to replace a lock of her bobbed hair that keeps slipping down. There is a look of displeasure on her rather small, Jewish face; it is evident that the work is not to her liking and that she is impatient to have done with it. From the kitchen can be heard the movements of Mrs. Goldstein who is engaged in making apple strudel, at the same time keeping an ear open to the conversation in the dining-room.

Mr. Goldstein selects the card to be sent to each customer, as Adele calls the name from the account book. It gives him pleasure to handle the colorful cards and to look at the pictures, and he actually feels a momentary regret at parting with some of the more beautiful ones. He is a man of fifty, with a bald crown surrounded by thick gray hair, a wrinkled forehead and a conspicuous, hooked nose. There is a dull and weary look in his mild little eyes.

"Shall I send one to Mrs. Krueger?" asks Adele, turning over a page of the ledger. "Her bill is paid up."

"Yes, you might as well . . ." answers her father, in Yiddish. "It will remind her that I am still on earth. Here, this one," and he chooses one of the simpler cards, bearing the greetings of the season under a design of holly wreaths.

"How about Mrs. Thompson?" asks Adele.

"Which Mrs. Thompson?"

"On Western Avenue."

"Oh, scratch her out. Didn't I tell you she was dead?"

"When did she die?" calls out his wife from the kitchen.

"She died three months ago. Her daughter told me."

"What was the matter with her?"

"Oh, I don't know. She was an old woman."

"Did she owe you anything?"

"No, she didn't buy anything for a long time."

"Pa," interrupted Adele impatiently, "how about Mrs. Kovalski?"

Mr. Goldstein sighs.

"Mrs. Kolvalski! That's a new deadbeat. Yes, send her a card. Here, this big one . . . the Polacks like big things."

"And Mrs. O'Brien?"

"Is Mrs. O'Brien as fat as ever?" calls out Mrs. Goldstein.

"As fat as ever!" he repeats. "You ought to see her now. She is fatter than ever. I wish she wasn't so fat. I've got plenty trouble getting dresses to fit her."

"Pa, listen," exclaims Adele angrily, "I haven't got all night. What about Mrs. Kaden?"

"Shah, shah, don't get excited. Here's one for Mrs. Kaden."

"And Mrs. Kramer? It's more than a year since she's made a payment."

Again Mr. Goldstein sighs and shakes his head.

"Ach, that's another misfortune! How much is her bill? Three hundred and fifty?"

"Three hundred and eighty-five."

"Nu, what can you do? How she used to buy, right and left, dresses and coats and stockings, and every week something new for her baby. I used to beg her, 'Mrs. Kramer, please pay up one bill before you start another,' but it was like talking to the wall. Her husband used to make good wages and she lived like a princess. If he knew how much she was buying he would have killed her."

"Is her husband still out of work?" inquires the voice from the kitchen.

"He hasn't done a day's work in a year and a half. And now to make it worse he drinks like a pig. He doesn't come home for weeks at a time. Where he gets the money for that rotten moonshine, God only knows."

"But what does she say? Doesn't she expect to pay you?" demands Mrs. Goldstein, appearing in the doorway. She has taken off her apron and stands there, short and dumpy, regarding her husband with an angry look. Her

double-chinned face is flushed from the heat of the kitchen and her black hair is disheveled. Mr. Goldstein feels that there is an argument brewing.

"What does she say?" he repeats, shrugging his shoulders. "What can she say? I tell her, 'Mrs. Kramer, please, I've got my bills to pay too. My creditors won't wait. I'm losing interest on my money.' So she begins to cry. 'Mr. Goldstein, believe me, I'd pay you if I only had the money.' Nu, what can I do? She is not lying to me. I can see for myself. The neighbors tell me she can't always buy milk for her baby."

"Why doesn't she go back to her mother?" asks Adele sharply, almost vindictively. She is annoyed with her father for inflicting this painful story upon her, yet at the same time she cannot help listening with a sullen interest.

"*She* should go back to her mother!" Mr. Goldstein replies. "If you knew her you wouldn't ask such a question. She'd kill herself first. Her mother is an ignorant Catholic; she said she never wants to see her daughter again after she ran away and married a—what do you call him—a Protestant. Nellie is a beautiful smart girl; she's got too much pride to go back to such a mother."

"What kind of a story are you telling me?" Mrs. Goldstein demands. "What is this? A beautiful girl, a smart girl. What has it got to do with you? How many times did I tell you to stop selling to them deadbeats. . . ."

"It is easy for you to say stop selling. And what if I did stop selling to her? She would have got another dealer—there's plenty of them coming to the house every day. And then where would I be? I'd have to wait until after she paid off the others."

"All right, let her get another dealer and the cholera take her. How many times did I tell you it's better to lose a hundred dollars to a deadbeat, than to keep giving and giving and giving until she chokes with your money!"

"But I'm telling you she's not a deadbeat. If her husband loses his job and doesn't work for a year, can she help it?"

"And maybe her husband doesn't work for two years! Maybe he doesn't work for ten years! What are you telling me? Did you stop giving her things when she stopped paying? Adele, look on her account. Didn't he give her a dress two weeks ago?"

"You don't have to ask Adele. I did give her a dress two weeks ago."

"Nu, didn't I know it! Can I help it if you haven't got any brains? Can I help it if you want to be a peddler all your life?"

"Peddler!" The word is like a slap in the face to Mr. Goldstein. His lips

tighten, he determines to end the argument then and there. For years now he has thought of himself as an "installment dealer," a business man, who belongs to an association, drives his own car, and makes appointments with his customers over the telephone. "Peddler" belonged to the old, bitter days when he used to work the back doors with a satchel in his hand, and it makes him wince inwardly to think of it.

"All right," he says, glaring back at his wife. "You've said enough. You can go back to your strudel now. If you must know, I'm going to let her have a coat tomorrow for Christmas, and if you want to know something else, I'm going to give her kid a new suit and a pair of shoes, and I'm not even going to put it down in the book. How do you like that?"

"Give her, give her!" Mrs. Goldstein fairly screams. "You think you're spiting me? You're only cutting off your own nose. You're a big fool, that's all. You think she'll thank you for it? You'll see, you'll find out. She'll call you Sheeney yet, just like the rest of them."

"Oh, ma!" exclaims Adele, "you give me a pain!"

"I give you a pain? All right, so I give you a pain. I should worry. Whatever I say, you always stick up with your father anyway . . ." and she turns about and slams the door of the kitchen behind her.

There is a brief silence after the storm. Mr. Goldstein, shaking his head hopelessly, takes his pipe out of his coat pocket and begins to fill it with tobacco. A soft whistling of steam is heard in the room and the nervous scratching of Adele's pen. Her father, still frowning, draws at his pipe and fingers the cards lying before him. He picks up the one he had reserved for his very best customer, Mrs. Salkberg, who has not once missed her weekly payment. The picture on the card represents a jolly scene in "Merrie Old England." A stagecoach, full of passengers in holiday attire, has stopped before an old inn with a snow-covered roof. The coachman is climbing down from the box; the stable boys are already tending to the horses; the old innkeeper is coming through the doorway with a lantern; the round, laughing face of one of the travelers protrudes from the window of the coach, blowing a horn at the world in general.

"Here, send this one to Mrs. Kramer," directs Mr. Goldstein.

Adele bestows a careless glance upon it as she slips it into the envelope.

"What could I do?" muses Mr. Goldstein aloud. "It was a pity after all. Here she was crying, and the little one looked so sad and dirty. When I went

out," he lowers his voice, "I put a five-dollar bill on the table when she wasn't looking."

Adele turns another page.

"Mrs. Berezinsky. Shall I send her a card?"

"Yes, send her . . ." he answers, absently.

"You think she took the money?" he continues. "No, next week when I came she handed it back to me. She was even angry. 'Mr. Goldstein, if you think I'm looking for charity . . .' and she bursts out crying. I say to her, 'Mrs. Kramer, what's the matter with you? Take it, as a loan. I'll put it down in the book if you want me to . . .'"

But at this point his daughter's patience gives way altogether.

"Oh, pa, for Heaven's sake, how much longer are you going to talk about Mrs. Kramer? You're driving me crazy. I've heard enough for one night. I've got a lot of reading to do."

"All right, all right, go and do your reading. You'll send the rest of the cards tomorrow."

I GET SO I CAN'T GO ON

by

Sherwood Anderson

THE four advertising men went to dine at a place called Skully's. "It's just a hole," Little Gil said, "but we'll be quiet." Frank Blandin wondered what there was to be quiet about. This was in Chicago and Frank went with the others because he just happened to be coming out of the office and met the three men. "Come along," they said. He hadn't any plans for dining. It was a cold, sloppy night with a drizzle of rain and he was in a sour mood. "All right," he said and walked along beside Little Gil, a copywriter like himself, looking at Gil and at the two men ahead. "Jesus," he thought, "ain't people up to a lot? . . .

"Civilization," he thought. Being in a sour mood, he was thinking about the others and himself, how they lived, going along, getting advertising ideas . . . some making drawings, others writing words. Things had to be sold. That was the terribly important thing. If you wrote a book, what good was it unless it was sold? The same with magazines and newspapers, automobile tires, clothes, shoes, hats, food, everything. "Sell it. Sell it. Sell it."

"Jesus, I'd better be thinking of something else." Little Gil, the man he was walking with, didn't say anything. It was like it was sometimes when he went to bed. Frank wasn't married. He had been, but his wife had got a divorce. That might be the real point of being married . . . someone to lie with at night. You can get into a scrap with her or make love or something. You've got someone to blame things on.

If you lie alone you think too much. Perhaps you read a book. An old Jew in the ghetto. How he suffers! You get to thinking about him. You have stopped reading in the middle of a chapter, so you try to carry the story along. Anything to get away from yourself. That's what books are for, isn't it? That's what men write them for. How do you know that isn't the reason men and women get married? You let yourself dream you are an old Jew in the ghetto, in the Middle Ages, putting out money, "hiring money to men,"

as Cal Coolidge would have said. "They hired the money, didn't they? Make 'em pay up. Make 'em pay the interest. Squeeze 'em. Squeeze 'em. Get even!" Thinking of things like that. Thinking of anything to get to sleep. You wake up and start another day.

They got to Skully's. Why was it called Skully's? The man who ran the place was a short squat figure of a man with dark skin and short coarse black hair. He looked greasy but he had a rather handsome wife. She was a big one with soft eyes. The man in the party who had steered them to the place was Bud, a commercial artist. Very likely he thought, "I'd like to paint her." He had happened to drop into the place and had thought that, and so he had come back, bringing Gil, the copywriter, with him, and the two had talked—that is to say, Bud had talked. "Look, Gil. I'd like to paint her. What a body! What arms! What legs! What shoulders! You'd have to get into it just the feeling of flesh, strong and sweet, very still, waiting and waiting. You get the idea?" Gil wouldn't have been much interested. "Sure, Bud. It ought to be swell." He knew Bud would never do it. Bud had to make advertising designs.

So there the four men were, in the place, sitting at a table at the back, in a corner. The fourth man in the party was named Al and he was a fat man with red cheeks on which blue veins showed. He was well dressed and had a big loose mouth and thin hair. He ate and drank too much, but that night he wasn't talking. He was a salesman, a contact man they called them now in advertising agencies.

Except for Frank, they were all busy on a new account . . . women's shoes . . . women's shoes of fine quality . . . expensive shoes. Bud had pried the account away from some other advertising agency. Frank looked at him. That night Al was placid as a cow, or better yet, a steer, but Frank supposed that when he got after an account he woke up, got up on his toes. He'd have a shot or two and go to it. Talk. Talk. Talk. Women's shoes of fine quality, made in St. Louis, Missouri. Well, why not? What's the matter with St. Louis?

"But I dunno. I always thought of St. Louis . . . it's in my mind that way . . . you know, fat Germans with fat wives. Heat. The muddy Mississippi. Everybody always sweating."

After dining, the three men would be going back to the office to spend the evening making designs for advertisements and writing advertisements, Little Gil to get the ideas and write the copy and Bud to make the designs,

the drawings. Frank looked across the table at Little Gil. He had his hands lying on the table, soft, rather meaningless little hands, like the hands of a girl child. He was self-conscious. When you looked at him he got nervous.

The men at the table were talking about the new account, what had to be expressed in the newspaper and magazine advertisements, the hook-up with shoe dealers—advertising men's talk. Bud said to Frank, "What's wrong with you, Frank? What makes you so quiet?" "Oh, I don't know," Frank said. "I'm that way," he said, and the others laughed, all except Al. They knew all right. They got that way themselves.

Al took a long, silver flask out of his hip pocket. It held a lot and he poured everyone a stiff drink. Frank looked at him and then at Al. "He's drinking too much," he thought. "What the hell do I care if he is?" Al called the proprietor's wife over to the table and asked her, "Have you got any lemons?" She hadn't any. "Well, can you get us some?"

The proprietor came in from the kitchen. The four men were the only diners in the place that night. The proprietor wore a little greasy white cap and a soiled white apron. The restaurant was on a side street in a wholesale district. Little Gil had said, "We can be quiet there," but Frank had thought, "What's to be quiet about?" Al gave the man a quarter and he went out for lemons, so they wouldn't have to drink straight grain alcohol, unflavored.

The woman, the proprietor's wife, might have been Italian, or a Greek or a Syrian. She was handsome, all right. . . . She and her husband both spoke brokenly. When the four men had given their orders she went a little away from them, to where there was a counter, near the front, and stood there. Pretty soon she got a chair and sat. From where she sat Frank was the only man of the four she could see, and she sat thus until they left. Her husband waited on the men. They all had the same thing—steak, that turned out to be pretty tough, French-fried potatoes, and peas out of a can. Then they all had some pie and coffee. . . . Anyway, a man's life goes like that. "I read too many books. I think too much," Frank thought. What was that line of Shakespeare's . . . "Perchance to dream . . . Ah, there's the rub. . . .

"There's the rub-a-dub-dub

There's the rub-a-dub-dub. . . ."

Frank decided he'd think about Little Gil, who sat across from him. "I'd better not look at him. It will make him self-conscious," he thought. Thinking about another man was like reading a book or being with a woman.

It took you away from self. That was what you wanted. He began making a picture of Gil's life, for the rest of the evening.

He'd go back to the office with the other two, Bud and Al. Al wouldn't work. Why should he work? He was a salesman. Frank smiled. "You got to sell it. What good is it unless you sell it?" he thought. Al would sit around, smoke cigars, read his newspaper. In comes Little Gil. "What about this idea?" He shows it to Al. Well, Al's got to sell it. Al stretches, takes the cigar out of his mouth. "Pretty good, Gil." Gil is just making rough suggestions. If Al thinks they'll do, Bud will make quick drawings and then Gil will write the text. Talk. Al might go out to a show later. He was going to take the one A.M. train for St. Louis.

"You see, this is the idea, Al. . . ." Gil would be making layouts, shapely women's legs. That's an original idea. Show a woman's leg.

"Say, in this game the less original you are the better. Get that out of your noodle about being original. Who do you think reads the ads, a lot of highbrows?"

The woman's foot in the shoe might be resting on purple velvet. There's a thought. Purple velvet suggests royalty. "Royal American beauties are demanding, etc." Look, the shoes are like little boats, sailing out on a purple sea.

Little boats on purple seas, going adventuring. Say, little shoes, where are you taking those lovely feet, lovely young women's legs . . . hips, breasts, shoulders, arms? . . . Whoa! What you got in the package, little woman?

Helen, Thy beauty is to me

Like some Nicean bark of yore. . . .

Funny how a man reads books, walks about, sleeps, eats, remembers snatches of poetry and song . . . all the time wondering, what the hell for, where the hell to. . . .

Surely not just to be able to write shoe advertisements. One of the copywriters in Frank's firm, Griver-Wharton . . . Tower-top Building, Chicago . . . once said to Frank . . . "I get so I can't go on," he said.

"So? What do you do?"

"I read Ralph Waldo Emerson. An essay of his, called 'Self Reliance,' helps me most."

"Then you go back at it again, eh?"

"Sure."

That Little Gil—copywriter—Frank never had thought much about him. Gee, what a lot of people you see every day, touch elbows. . . . Ha, here we go! Forward, march! Here we go! You never really think about them. How can you? There are so many of them. . . . What happened to Frank that night he dined with Bud, Al and Gil was a matter of no importance. You read a lot of books, don't you, and never think about them again? Very likely the author has sweat blood, trying to write that book. All right. That's his funeral. Take it back to the three-cent-a-day. Get me another. It was just a rainy night and Frank didn't feel like going home to read. He just sat there in the restaurant with the others. He was eating in silence and taking a good look at the woman, the wife of the proprietor of the place, the one Bud had thought he wanted to paint. She was sitting so none of the others could see her and she kept looking at Frank and he returned the compliment. She wasn't so young, maybe thirty-three or four, with dark soft skin and big dark eyes. Big breasts, big shoulders and strong shapely legs. The way she was sitting in the chair she spread her legs a little, and Frank thought . . .

"Gates of Hercules," he thought,

"When out of Palos came the gold
To storm the gates of Hercules."

...

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night. . . .

There was a creeping smile, back somewhere, in Frank, and in the woman. Frank let his thoughts drift. He thought about Bud. But didn't want to be a commercial artist. He remembered what someone in the office had said that day . . . "Bud's drinking too much. He's slipping. He isn't half the man he was a year ago. His drawings haven't any zip to them any more." The knockers! Bud had a flair for Frank. He thought Frank was wise, onto people, sophisticated. "That's the way to be," Bud said to himself, "don't expect anything. Trust no one." I am master of my fate. I am captain of my soul. "Rats," Frank thought. Still he thought Bud was O.K.

What was that line he had thought out, Bud talking to Gil. Oh, yes. "Look, Gil. What arms! What legs! What shoulders! Flesh, strong and sweet, very still, waiting and waiting." That is what Bud would have said to Gil.

I suppose that's the way it starts between a man and a woman, any man

and any woman. What was it William James said about religion? . . . Music at the back of the mind—that's it. You don't always follow it up . . . not one time in ten. How can you? What's all this got to do with anything?

The point is that Frank found out that Gil was a fairy. How? How does a man find such things out—suddenly like that? You are sitting and don't know it and then you are sitting, and you do know.

You don't want to know. It hurts . . . not you, but him. That man's cork's out. What about pity? The poor guy.

Nothing happened that night when the four advertising men dined. They had steaks and French-frieds and peas that came out of a can. No, we haven't any other vegetable. Forty cents each. Al paid. He left another forty cents for the big woman who came to get the dishes and she took it smiling. Frank didn't talk. "A fellow ought to take a thing like this," he thought, "like reading a book." Title of book, "Rainy Night in Chicago" . . . "a mystery story." Nights in Chicago were just as mysterious and strange as, say, nights in Egypt, on the Nile—why not? Or Stanley in Africa . . . Stanley in darkest African jungles . . . rain, fever, sores on the legs, animals in the dense forests at night. . . .

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night. . . .

The point was that Frank's eyes looked up suddenly from that embrace—you might call it that—with the eyes of that big dark-skinned woman and met the eyes of Little Gil. Her eyes had been saying it as a woman's eyes do say it to a man who has taken her fancy. Gee, wouldn't it be swell living in the world, if people could be honest? You, being a man, don't ever get one woman. . . . "There, that settles it—that's off my mind" . . . and a woman, a real woman, don't ever get that from any one man.

But Frank, looking around suddenly, had got it also from Little Gil's eyes.

What . . . you mean . . . from a man?

Well, yes. If Gil was a man.

That, to Frank, was the sudden hurtful thing that night he dined with the three men. It shocked and hurt him . . . that hungry waiting thing in Gil's eyes. There must have been something that gave Frank away, a shadow passing across his face. Something within him drew away and then, in a flash, he

got it all. Once Little Gil had been ill at home and Frank went with Bud to see him. He remembered two sisters and an old mother. The mother was a gentle quiet white-haired old woman. In that family the father was dead and they all dependent on Little Gil. Sometimes you have moments of looking into the future. You are in the dark—in the dark tunnel of life, as it were—and you look ahead and see what is going to happen as you look along a tunnel to the opening at the far end. Gil was in business and dependent on men like Al, now sitting and talking to Bud. Suddenly Frank heard a conversation going on between Al and some other man, like Al, say five or ten years ahead.

"D'you remember that Little Gil who used to be at Griver-Wharton's?"

"Sure. Why?"

"Well, at Detroit . . . in a hotel lobby. The man knocked him down and he got thrown out of the hotel."

"Of course he lost his job?"

"Sure."

"Where the hell's he now?"

"How should I know? Say, I never could stand one of those guys. Once one of them spoke to me. I knocked hell out of him."

That sort of thing hadn't happened often to Frank and it gave him a queer feeling. Gil's hands and lips were trembling and he was blushing like a young girl. He looked quickly away, but Frank saw something. Terror came into Gil's eyes as he looked away. Al and Bud kept on talking. "Who was it took Christ down from the cross?" Frank thought. "I remember about their nailing him up. Who was it took him down? Oh, I remember now. It was Joseph, the rich young man."

Frank Blandin in the rain walking and walking . . . alone, after the dinner with the three men. He left them at the door of Skully's and they went back to the office of Griver-Wharton. The rain was cold. Frank didn't have a date and didn't feel like reading. He decided to walk home. He lived far out on the South Side. He walked. . . .

Through nigger streets. . . .

White streets. . . .

Swell streets. . . .

Poor streets. . . .

He passed street-car barns. He thought of something. "Remember those

guys they called the street-car bandits. I wish someone would try to hold me up here, in this dark street. I'd like to punch someone."

Gil would be at work at the office of Griver-Wharton. When Frank had left the others at the door of Skully's, Gil had shrunk away. Now he would always be a little afraid of Frank. He'd be at work now, trying to think up ideas for advertisements for women's shoes. Bud would be there, making quick drawings.

Al would be waiting around. He might go out to a show. "Gil, don't you want another shot out of my flask?"

"No, thanks, Al."

"Those ideas you're getting are O.K. Go ahead." Bud was drinking too much. He got spiffed almost every night. If a guy like that wants to paint, why don't he just go ahead? Suppose he starves? What of it? You get to thinking about someone, like Bud or Little Gil, and it's like reading some queer book. You get to thinking about a city, like Chicago, or an advertising agency, or the members of a church, it's like a book . . . like fiction written by some crazy man.

Gil might be in his office, alone now for a moment. "Did I give myself away to him?" He knows he did. "I've tried. I've tried. I can't help it if I'm this way.

"I get so tired trying."

He'd put his little girlish face down in his little hands and cry a little. Frank walking in the rain. "Go on and cry, little thing. It'll do you good.

"But, they'll get you. They'll get you.

"They'll get onto you.

"They'll find out.

"They'll find out."

When Frank got home, pretty wet and tired, he mixed himself a shot. Then he took a hot bath. Gee, I got to find something to read. I got to get my mind off all this. . . . He found a new book beside his bed. Rackets and swindles. And the wiser birds, the bankers. . . . It was no use. He turned off the light. "There's Little Gil," he thought, again. "What about him? . . . Jesus, I better be thinking about something else."

THREE DELTA ROMANCES

by

E. P. O'Donnell

TEN PURPLE COMMANDMENTS

●

THE one man in Belle Plume without a pirogue was Layo John. Although, standing behind the levee, he could name a boat by the sound of its engine, he dreaded the sight of the water. His sickness prevented his going near the river. He might have a spell.

Sometimes he could feel the spell coming on, but usually it seized him unawares, while he was mixing soapsuds to bug his roses, or stepping over a sleeping sow. Say a gang of fishermen would be busy loafing by the Post Office. Layo would pass by, humming blithely with his package under his arm, when—*Sacre!* Catch him!

Everybody knew what to do. No disorder. No alarm. Simply stretch Layo out with his beard clear of the dust, quickly open his package and pour out a dose of the black stuff from St. Louis, spill it down the side of his cheek, and wait. Soon, Layo's eyes would flutter open, and his face return to its natural shade of green.

"Tank you, *mes amis*. My package, please."

Otherwise, he went about unnoticed. Well? He was no wit; he had no calling, except carving decoy ducks. He knew nothing to wrangle about or to boast of, and he avoided social gatherings. So they bade him the time of day, answered his comments upon the state of the gnats, sand-bagged his portion of the levee during flood, and when he drank too much on All Saints' Day, kept him from wandering to the rickety fish pier.

(He had gotten himself talked about only once, when he kissed a girl on

the sly. The sly is a spot located behind the ear. The girl punched him. Layo did not force another kiss upon her. He returned the punch, using his good hand. Layo's bad hand was not shrunken. It was much smaller than the other, but that was because it had stopped growing when he had his terrible illness. It had stayed young, nine years old.)

Now once a big floating hippodrome came. Layo got drunk that day, and insisted on hanging about the wharf. A showboat hand saw someone driving Layo away, and invited Layo aboard to learn the name of that damned place where liquor was sold to a poor cripple. The cooks sent for a quart, then gave Layo a big stiff drink of black coffee and tucked him behind the boilers on a donkey breakfast to sober up. As he lay asleep, the tipsy cooks for a little joke shined his shoes. Then some of the women performers curled his beard with their tongues. It was a long silky affair, of a deeper golden than his head. Questioned next day about the curls, Layo modestly explained that an old friend of his on the showboat had done the job for him. The people pretended not to believe him.

The hippodrome's captain liked duck hunting, so the showboat stayed several days for engine repairs. Layo somehow became acquainted with a stout German stateroom maid with long hair the color of river fog. That was the second day. Layo, minus his package, took her to the packing house to see the Sunrype fruit being colored with carbon monoxide. He and the girl could not understand each other's talk, but the girl held him by his bad hand, which was smooth, chubby and dimpled, probably reminding her of some friend's child. On the third day, Layo showed her his garden, planted not in front, but behind the house.

On the fourth day, they visited the shrimp cannery. The Slavonian canners nudged each other and called to Layo through the rich vapors. This foreman of the canners knew Russian, and so did the girl, and he gladly acted as translator for Layo and his friend, a few words.

That night the German girl spent with Layo. She was seen leaving his house early next morning with some grapefruit, and a crucifix which Layo had carved out of a sweet cypress board from his own outhouse. The women of Belle Plume began calling Layo a rascal in his kind of French, because they thought he had made love all night. But he had only carved the crucifix while the other watched.

The next afternoon, the German girl got off early. She and Layo spent

some time looking for the Slavonian foreman to translate for them, but Nick was hiding in the canes, waiting for Layo to leave the girl.

In the evening, Layo was with the German girl at the stern of the show-boat when the first whistle blew. The boat was leaving for New Orleans. Some women performers were on deck washing their hair. They had obtained a supply of rain water for a final shampoo before leaving the country of cisterns. The German girl signalled Layo to please fetch her some of the water, and passed him a bucket, her own personal bucket with the name painted all over it. Layo jumped ashore and hurried through the crowd toward his house, but just after descending the levee, Blump! he took a spell. All the people ran down to Layo, and the floating hippodrome backed out.

After that, for a long time Layo received purple letters from the girl. Inside, they were written in a strange language. The Postmaster said the writing resembled magnified germs, and that it was Jewish, the same as the writing on the tablets pictured in the Catechism. Ten letters came, and no one could read them.

Layo went on living his secluded life. As the years passed, now and then some jovial friend would think of the German girl, and ask Layo whether he had yet been able to decipher the ten commandments, as the letters were called. Layo would stiffen like a gnarled gold-headed cane.

Some years later, a man came walking down the levee, pinching people's name out of gold wire on a pin for fifty cents. Someone told Layo this man was a Jew (a peddler). On his return trip the next week, Layo put the peddler up for the night, because it was blowing a full gale. The two men sat up late, talking, while the wind pawed the panes and occasional ripe oranges broke on the roof. The Jew read the letters from the German girl to Layo, then abruptly said good-night and spent the remainder of the night fully dressed on the bed thinking of his people in Russia.

Something started happening inside of Layo. In short, he became interested in living. He began to brighten up, and threw away the black bottle from St. Louis. Soon, he was participating in the Post Office wrangles, attending christenings, and even boasting of his knife-throwing prowess and his chrysanthemums. As a result, people began to notice him. They sat on his blue doorstep and told him their affairs, and dropped in to buy a crucifix or listen to Layo's new radio. Now no man would think of asking Layo to hold his donkey.

Then one day—

"Dey say Layo John got a pirogue, him."

It was true. Layo had conquered his fear of the river. Paddling about on invented missions, he would shout and wave at them from mid-stream, and they stood watching with hands on hips, then walked away muttering. Certainly, Layo would some day get a spell on the water. Layo did not deny this possibility, but, on the other hand, he was just as likely to die in his sleep. But the people were right. Layo eventually drowned. He went out to enjoy a little paddle, enjoyed it, and never returned.

At his wake, the jolly trappers gathered in the woodshed to tell stories and finish Layo's wine. Above their heads, the German girl's bucket was hanging with a maiden-hair fern in it, and her name still painted in red lead all over it, Naomi, Naomi, Naomi.

REGONIA TRANSEP



BEFORE his wife died, Renzo Jeantier, who grew the largest lemons in Belle Plume, had only two bad habits, sleeping during Vespers, and working hard.

But when Tata died, Renzo went bad, bad. After the wake, he did not sober up as a man should, nor curse God at the grave. He stayed drunk a week, let his new bull scythe rust under the guavas, and called his best friends a flock of so-and-so (sons-of-bitches) because when Tata was alive they had always given Renzo right in his connubial quarrels, and Tata emphatically wrong. At Tata's grave, he was too mad to jump in. He actually threw in his personal skinning knife.

That terrible week! Pounding the levee, pounding the levee, Renzo staggered to and fro, drinking anything that went guggle, and still cursing his friends. Day and night. He would linger on the levee before a dwelling and begin cursing, from the latest New Orleans swear-curses to the venerable

Creole oaths reminiscent of one's youthful brawls. And he'd wave his bottle, and hop up and down in the moon like a man with a flounder bone in his tonsils. He prowled through the thyme beds and orchards in the dark, hunting wine, until some people decided to buy doorlocks.

At last, the Sheriff Deputy took him, and nailed him in a telephone booth which a river flood had once washed up, and Renzo went to sleep. When he awoke he went to Confession and put on some shoes. In a few days he married a woman, because he was afraid to sleep in his house alone so soon after Tata's death. Regonia Transep.

Regonia was a dark, jolly little woman who had no chance of getting a husband with love. She had lost her job at the orange packing house for getting caught with a man after the one o'clock bell.

They did not get along. Regonia was a working woman, who could trap, hoe trees, and skin a mink quicker than a man, and neater; but she was not strong enough for Renzo. That is to say, as time shuffled on, and Renzo got meaner, Regonia grew meeker, and even more good-natured than before. She never cursed him back as Tata had, nor resisted his blows, but only hid somewhere for a good little cry. What was she good for? Nothing but cooking, scrubbing, and jumping to serve him when he came home. A man wants a woman with some fight in her. Renzo would not even force her to sleep on the floor. He lay there himself, while he gave her Tata's sweet cypress bed.

Renzo drank more and more. Alligator grass took his trees, and small boys made a battleship out of his pirogue. One day his property was sold for taxes. The buyer was some Florida fellow with a hobby for fruit culture, who bragged at the Post Office that he would show them how to grow limes and grapefruit on the same tree. That night after the sale, the people sneaked into Renzo's orchard and stripped the trees of their fruit in an hour, but he was not there to help them. He had left for Big Grass Margin with his lugger, his wife, and his last barrel of orange wine.

The Coast Guard was working that week. On the way down, every time he saw a patrol boat approach, before they had chance to hail him for search, Renzo would shout to them to come have a drink. They did not arrest Renzo or his attractive wife. The big brown captains ogled Regonia, and this gave Renzo an idea.

Renzo needed money and food. Now the whole Margin had been leased, and there was a lonely trapper in every shack along the river, hungry for a look at a woman. He called Regonia.

"Take my pirogue, you, and dig down duh river wid a demijohn of wine. Stop in every shack and keep duh trapper talking and laughing and so on, while me I go roun' duh back bay and open his traps. When you hear me fire duh gun, you say au 'voir, and dig down to duh nex' trapper, and stay with him till me I clean out *his* traps."

Pretty good. They played that game a long time, making a round of the Margin about every two weeks. So now Renzo could drink and gamble all he wanted. He collected as many as a hundred pelts a day, worth anywhere from two to six bits. Regonia didn't mind. She grew a paddle arm as hard as Renzo's, and skinned the animals in the night.

Doing Renzo's bidding, she was silly with joy. While in a trapper's shack talking and laughing and so on, she would listen acutely for Renzo's shot across the ooze. She knew her part. In fact, everybody concerned knew his part well. The trappers knew Renzo was taking their animals. For instance, a trapped 'coon in escaping chews away his toes and leaves them behind. The trappers were finding coon hair, but no toes. Renzo did not bother to leave any toes. He knew the trappers knew what was what.

One evening, Regonia came late to their meeting place.

"What you call this, you woman?"

"I been late all day, and dat's from talking too long to Joe Dugas this morning, dat new trapper nex' to Octave Benoit. I didn't heard you fire his shot, Joe Dugas. Den when I leave him, I was get mix up all day from duh shots, me. Sometime you shoot just when I was knocking on a trapper's door, mix up lak dat all day long."

This happened again two weeks later. Thereafter, in this section of the Margin, confusion always occurred. Regonia would overstay her time with Joe Dugas, talking. She seemed willing to risk a beating, just to talk to that new trapper. Renzo couldn't understand.

"I want duh truth, me!" he shouted. "I don't care me what you do wid dat man. But don' tell me you stay dat long for *talk!*"

"*Mais*, sho' I stay for talk!" replied Regonia, almost angry. "What you tink, he is like those other fellow aroun' here, him? He is nice man, Joe Dugas. I lak him too much to sit on his leg-knee, or go in his other room. I'm shame from dat with him."

Impossible! What was this Dugas trying to do? Steal a man's wife? But no!

"Never mind what you shame from! Negs time we pazz on dat fellow

plaze, I want you 'tend to what you got to 'tend to, and bus' away soon you hear my shot, you. Ef you don' come quick, you can stay, and me I get 'nother woman!"

All right. Once again, two weeks later, Renzo took his toll from Joe Dugas. He finished in the rabbit-grass near the shack. Raising his gun and firing, he crept closer and waited for Regonia. After some minutes, he fired again, both barrels. No Regonia. He went to the cabin and looked in the window. Regonia was plucking a marsh hen. Renzo went inside and talked to Joe Dugas. They finally agreed that what Renzo really needed was an occupation, and a place to live in, a good distance from Belle Plume, where he would not be afraid to sleep alone. So Renzo took Dugas' trapping lease, and Dugas took the lugger and the woman.

The queerest thing is that as soon as he parted with the docile Regonia, Renzo was able to forget his spirited first wife. That season he trapped enough pelts to make the first payment on another orchard, and in a little while he was being censured again for expending too much labor on his trees, and dozing in church.

THE PEOPLE WERE WAITING



STRANGERS keep away from Belle Plume. Father Fred's sister will visit him, or a green shoulder drummer or fur buyer will come. But strangers never. It is too inaccessible and dull.

When That Whistling Fellow got off the mailboat without baggage and asked for a place to board, everybody wondered. Nice clothes! Plenty money! No bundles or valise-grip! But no!

"You gon' stay a couple days, you?" asked Jule, the storekeeper.

"Yeah. Coupla days, maybe longer."

"*Bon!* Well, you try duh lavender houze aroun' duh ben' from dat mast-

pole. Big mast-pole on the levee. Miss Canopi. Daz where duh lighthouse inspectal stay sometime. Are you duh new lighthouse inspectal?"

"O.K. Can you change twenty? Lessee . . . first thing I want a booka stamps. No! First I want a drink."

"*Bon!* Now, we got cold grape vision, we got—"

"Come ahn. Somma that corn liquor I smell, brudda!"

To Mrs. Caponi, as he called her, he said, "Yes, ma'm. A nice room. Look, I could pick oranges from my window. Now about those poipers, you can have the three New Orleans poipers sent down every day."

"*Mais, sho', Messieu!* And duh name, *Messieu?*"

"Just keep calling me that. But the poipers, you can have them sent to yourself. I'm going down to take in the Loop."

Eh, bien! Now the people would find out who this man was! Miss Canopi would tell them everything. She might keep them guessing a while, but she could not keep quiet long. Miss Canopi was a personage. She had cash. Pigs waited patiently before her garbage heap. Only *her* grove yielded seedless fruit. A few other levee dwellers had cypress boat landings, but not also creosoted. She was so contemptuous of the Belle Plume bachelors that she could smile cordially at the most humble shrimper, if the wind were blowing from her to him.

The people kept waiting. They dared not directly question Miss Canopi, who liked to savor her gossip before spitting it out, but why didn't she hurry up and say something? Surely, after boarding him a week, she should know who the man was, and what he was after.

Alas, the nice young boarder would not talk about himself! Miss Canopi well knew her people were waiting. She almost enjoyed their discomfiture, but she had been taught to be kind to the poor. Further, her prestige as a connoisseur of levee gossip was in jeopardy. Still further, her people considered her an oracle. She could create a prostitute with her eyebrow, and a click of her tongue would ruin the sale of a malaria nostrum forever.

Finally, *mon Dieu!* there was her own agonizing curiosity about the dapper stranger. Writing letters, letters every day, and never receiving any; swimming in the river with the children; telling funny stories at the store; and taking long, mysterious walks, with his sweet whistling trailing behind that made the mocking-birds cock their heads. Yet so childishly reluctant to make overtures to a pretty woman!

Surely, he talked, in his irresistibly bantering way, about everything

under the sun, and some things above it: cows have two stomachs; before the Chinese came, Californians sent their laundry to Honolulu; tin makes thunder in the theatre! Everything under the sun but himself! Just as if he didn't count at all. Or as if he couldn't unburden his heart to a rich young belle who knew a few things herself!

A neighbor would bring an extra large fig cake.

"An' dat whistling fellow, Miss Canopi? He's going back home soon, him, Miss Canopi?"

"Well not for lil while yet."

"An' where he lives at, Miss Canopi?"

"Ah, he's come from behind duh Rocky Candy Mountains, and dat's in duh West."

"Oh! Duh West! Just think of dat!"

"*Oui*. Now I'm *gon'* tell you something, Miss George Pete. You know something? They got big depression up *there*, yes, where him he's come from."

"Ah, no wonder duh po' fellow . . . Depression . . ."

"You blame him from leaving?"

"*Mais non*, po' fellow, me I'm gon' burn a candle for him right away!"

But such scraps of vague information were only more tantalizing. Outwardly, Miss Canopi smiled confidently, while she was indulging her secret vice of tracing triangles on the roof of her mouth with the tip of her tongue, nervously.

Miss Canopi's niece came over the river one day. Juanette was the daughter of a black sheep brother who had married a Cuban. She was witty and plain. The boarder heard her laughter, and emerged from his room for matches. Introducing them, Miss Canopi saw something take growth in their eyes.

That night Miss Canopi did something strange. She changed her mind. "Me I change my mind," she told Juanette. "You don' need to go home to-night lak I said. You can stay couple days." She wanted Juanette to make friends with the boarder, so she forbade her to monkey with the man, then went visiting and left them alone.

In the morning she upbraided Juanette. "He didn't *tell* you anything! What did you *ask* him? Stupid you lak your father, why didn't you ask duh man who his name is, and where he's going? Did he play off lak married

man, or pretend he is single? You think I let my neez go with man dat she don' know his name, me?"

"His name Mr. Mess You, I tol' you, Aunt Big Estelle."

So it went for weeks. Juanette learned nothing. That is, nothing of value. They would play tag in the grove, or he taught her strange songs and card tricks, and when there was no moon they talked on the wharf in the keen odor of creosote. But Juanette knew nothing about him. Worse, *sacre nom!* she seemed content to know nothing! And the people were waiting.

Once Miss Canopi lost her temper and told Juanette to go. But when Juanette started to walk off quietly, Miss Canopi relented and merely beat the girl with a churn-handle. She forbade Juanette ever to talk to the boarder again, then went out and spent the night with a sick friend.

The boarder had seen something in the paper. He would walk up and down, then pick up the paper again. He was leaving on the mailboat that night. Juanette quickly prepared wild goose sandwiches for him. Her eyes were very dry. Now she was glad she knew nothing about him. Scouring pots, one may forget a dream.

Miss Canopi came in next morning and found Juanette weeping under the figs. Miss Canopi swooped. To have people on the road inform her of her own boarder's departure! With the churn-handle she swooped.

She stood over the girl with lifted cudgel.

"Are you gon' tell me something about dat man?"

"He was nize fellow, all I know. You could see dat yourself, you. What else you want?" Juanette ignored the cudgel—ignored all but her sweet grief, which she clasped to her bosom and rocked to and fro in a tribal gesture.

"Don' tell me you don' know something about him, Juanette! Juanette! Can't you tell what he's think of duh people, and you, and me? What did he say befo' he left? What did he say about *me*, all duh time you go with him, about *me*?"

Juanette raised her head and remembered something. Her grief fell away. Her mouth opened, and she was wild, charming, beautiful with derision. She began pounding her knees with her fists, and giggling. The falling blows thudded over her head and shoulders, and she laughed the louder. Her aunt followed her to the levee, and farther and farther, viciously pounding away, striving to beat down the wild laughter.

EMIGRANT INTO NIGHT

by

Eugene Jolas

THIS was the new geography. He wandered through the house, fingered a chair here, a knick-knack there, listened to dialogues undulating around him. It was a quiet interlude. Chipped moments of precisions. What feast awaited the swift fingers of morning?

He spun himself into his perplexities. The minutes became years. The May morning floated into him with a facile change of altitudes. A tinkle of muddy vocables came back and a confusion of voices slid by. He was at the end of a long road. In the dissonance of his memories he felt the decay of miracles. He confessed himself, time stood still, an angel passed by on mist-weighted wings.

He watched his mother, white-haired and smiling, go through the course of her household duties. His father, frail with disease, asked him questions about his voyage. He wondered at the enormous wall the years had reared between himself and his people. Where was the house of the picture-books? He essayed, with timid sounds, the dialect he had almost forgotten. His brothers seemed strangers to him, their eyes had a foreign luster, they stumbled over remembered phrases.

He tried to re-discover the sound, the smell, the color of the house he had left ten years before. There's Michel, a bit obese, very old-world and in love with Gothic ruins and ivy. He remembered games in the forests, the roving walks through the villages, the talks of high adventurings. In the fall they had gathered blackberries in the hills, there had been apples in the garret and herbs heaped up to dry for medicinal purposes. At night the children had told each other stories in their rooms, ghost-stories and stories of far countries. Now the war lies between them, hunger and huddle, the crash of bombs from aeroplanes, the rush to the cellar on cold winter nights, the fear of nightmare hours. His brothers are youths with square shoulders and

staccato speech, they talk about girls and revolutions, they are mature beyond their years.

He left the house. People were swarming to the market. He roamed among the stands, a merry-go-round stood in the middle of the square, the tavern overflowed with visitors from the near-by villages. Many faces swam past him. Here and there he recognized familiar features. He shook hands, back from America, you must be a rich man, well, it's the same old town, we're muddling along, the war's knocked us out of gear.

Strange, he was still vibrating with the shock of America. Cities returned. Faces emerged from the background of his fantasies. Two weeks ago he had said goodbye to New York, his nerves taut with the vibration of motors, his father's house luring him like the refuge of a mountain-lodge during a storm. Now the phantoms of a decade saturated with confusions still danced in his mind.

As he walked slowly through the streets, absorbed in the tangle of his sensations, he saw once more the gray hour in West Street, when he embarked for Europe. He had made the decision to leave suddenly. And as he stood, excited and brooding, on the pier, a rush of unutterable sadness came over him. A sob had come into his throat, while the boat was gliding down the harbor. So many hours came back fraught with ecstasy and fear. Before him stretched the vista of his youth smothered in soot and ruins. At night the stars bloomed on the waves, and over the steerage passengers came an enchantment. Aliens going home, they clustered together in the evenings, exchanging grunting verbs, facing the gray tedium of the hours in weary expectations. Sometimes he heard music hallooing down the hall where the plebeian hammocks were swung. America lay back of them. Many tongues whirled through the air. Somewhere, they felt, lies Atlantis.

He listened to their distorted words and wondered what he would find at the end of his voyage. The sea gave him a tranquillity he had not known for many years, and he wandered about, sunk in a languorous passivity. He was so weary of the struggle, he heard a ritournelle of old folk-songs, scraphic was his road. Now, he mused, I am on a pilgrimage of the heart.

He inhaled the air of Europe. The little houses he saw from the train excited him, the old continent vaulted towards his vagabond seasons with fragments of folk-tales. He started humming a tune from his childhood. All day long the express carried him from the harbor across the land of his ancestors.

Night had already invaded his home town, when he arrived. He recognized the name of his frontier station, his home town in sleep. He heard the bell of the church familiarly clang the half-hour over the roofs. Through crooked alley-ways he walked. The world of his past came spectrally toward him. He saw a light in the window of his parents' house. A gas-lamp sputtered in the milk-white mist. A nearby tavern spilled garish music on the pavement.

He knocked at the window. Who's there? I'm back from America! he shouted. There was a cry in the room. A rush to the door.

Now the Angelus sang noon over the town. A childhood friend greeted him, he had been in the trenches, he walked with shuffling steps. They had once played together. Then Europe was tranquil and *Biedermeier*. The frontier was sunning itself without strangling apprehensions. He watched his friend stumbling off. A great tenderness was in him.

He stepped into the coolness of his house, thinking of all the houses in which he had lived during his American years. He greeted his mother, many years her image had been with him—cherubic world. His father was busy opening his trunk, astonished to find nothing more exciting than a few torn clothes and some books. He looked at his father and knew that nothing was changed. He stared at the marks of an intransigent conflict. His American life revolved around him, loneliness and struggle and longing. Yet it had been anarchy, it had been blazing freedom. And he thought: I pleaded for love, and you sent me into the desert of machines. The planes of the skyscrapers stood against his vision. Roar of wheels between cubical avenues suddenly wallowed in his brain.

Limping dialogues accompanied the meal. The rebel's trappings were still over him. He had strayed into an ambiance of oddities. He had expected ballads and found ditties. His brothers related the town's shifting story: A girl in the neighborhood had become Magdalene. A married man had deserted his family for a servant girl. They meditated the news that a new slaughter-house was to be built. A smuggler was shot down last night.

He walked about the house, the afternoon trickled through his fingers, neighbors called bringing bagatelles of sentiments. He fled into his old room. His school books were still lying in a dusty heap. He thumbed them, he had stood in a confusion before life, tears filled his eyes as he read. This was his Latin grammar; an atlas was out of date; a copy book filled with fumbling words was open before him.

by Eugene Jolas

He remembered now the winter when he had to leave school. Poverty had stalked into the house. Father decided to emigrate to America. The word had exploded into the misery-laden air. Every evening they had been sitting around the table, his parents were studying colored pamphlets, there were pictures of banana trees and maize fields and coffee plants. Then he had created a dream continent of his own. He was a heroic figure against green horizons. He saw himself in the prairies of the Far West. "Old Iron-Fist" they called him. His horse was known from one camp fire to the other. The fame of his prowess sent fear into the hearts of the red men. The guns he and his comrades used had no equal in all the wide savannah. He was the ruler of mighty tribes of savages. In a brocaded tent he had his abode, beautiful, exotic girls were at his beck and call, heaps of gold nuggets glimmered before his eyes. He had forsworn his white traditions. He was the Conqueror of the Prairie. Through luminous twilights he would ride in ecstatic tension. They would celebrate his new columbiad with martial rhythms. He founded an impregnable empire from Alaska to the Rio Grande.

He walked through the house like a somnambulist. He could not shake off the unrest that was in him. As the afternoon sank into ruins, it came back and something shuddered in his nerves. The silence of the house oppressed him and he went out.

Once more the town came toward him with churches and chimes, with arcades and ancient fortress walls. Above on the hill, stood the castle in ruins. He remembered his childhood sense of Gothic things. He had read Novalis, the Middle Ages were over him with illuminated manuscripts, a fairy tale world shimmered in his nights. That was his romanticism, moon over ivied ruins, an urge toward the infinite.

The houses stood shuttered in the sun. People he had known before the war lived here, then came the shifting of frontiers, new families had arrived. Something sinister hid behind the doors. Stories of incest emerged, the intoxication of the blood, demonic possession of the flesh. He hurried on, he walked past clover fields, wheat and barley ripened in the sun, goats climbed through brambles.

He turned off into a little foot-path he used to love as a boy. He had often walked here when he felt out of tune with the town. In the autumn before his departure for America he had sought the solitude of this place. Here he had roamed about, had watched the death-throes of nature in the

ultimate flare of stained leaves and grass, had day-dreamed about the foreign land he would soon see. The blackberry bushes were still here.

He looked at his town from a hill. Bluish lights were in the valley. He hastened his footsteps. He felt a sense of devastation. World-fear invaded him. His home seemed far away. The potato fields around him quivered in the evening wind.

Bats flitted about his house as he finally stood in front of the door. Supper was on the table. He had little to say. He watched his mother's eyes. They lay balm on his confusion. His brothers related the day's events: the football club was about to go bankrupt. Another smuggling story. Scandal. His father had read an article about America: it seemed that New York would certainly be the biggest city in the world.

In his room he began a letter to a friend in America. He fell asleep. His head covered the first few sentences. The oil lamp sputtered. He was in a grotto. A woman lived there in fear and pain. Stamping mustangs invaded the place. A flaming pony rushed at him. He cried for help. The woman came toward him. She was now of pneumatic stature. She enfolded him. A river foamed and plunged into an immense Atlantic.

WAIT A MINUTE, DON'T GO

by

Russell MacCallum

WHAT the hell do you wanta go home for? To sleep?" Emmett has you by the coat collar, and he is shaking you. His eyes are inflamed. "Sit down. . . . Plenty o' time to sleep," he says, "when they wrap ye up in . . . yer wooden kimono."

Emmett has asthma bad. His wind is all shot (like everything else about him) and he spits out his words in little bunches of five and six.

"Sit down. . . . I wanta tell ye somethin'. . . . Wanta tell ye 'bout the time . . . 'bout the time me and . . . Chappie Boyce . . . was spearin' fish . . . at Lake Terror."

He breaks off suddenly, pretends to search through his pockets, and then looks at the others with a bewildered expression on his face. "Gud . . . dammit!" he explodes. "I left me cigarettes at home." Someone passes around a package. Emmett's hands tremble as he cups them to take the light.

"Where was I?" he resumes. "What the hell was I talkin' about?" He grasps the kid beside him by the shoulder. "Kin you tell me? What was I talkin' about?"

The kid has an impudent grin.

"Your grandmother," he says. "Wild Maggie."

"Oh! THAT old tart!" Emmett laughs. "No. Was I talkin' about her?"

"You were talkin' about the time the loup garou followed you home. Remember?"

"Oh, sure." Emmett laughs again, and raises his hand for silence. He is about to begin, but turns away instead and beckons to a waiter. "Arnaud . . . ye gud damn stool pigeon . . . come over here. . . . Where's the drinks? . . . What the hell . . . do ye think we're here for?"

Arnaud glances helplessly around the table and shrugs his shoulders. Someone throws out a dollar bill. Arnaud sweeps up the glasses and goes to the bar for more beer.

"D'I ever tell ye," Emmett continues, "'bout the time I blew in a thousand bucks . . . in one week-end . . . in Detroit?"

"Sure. Hundreds of times."

"It was TWO thousand, Emmett. YOU forget."

"Tell us about Mrs. Peel, Emmett."

"Yes. Tell us about Mrs. Peel."

"Aw, * * * *! I'm just after tellin' ye."

"No, you didn't, Emmett."

"I didn't hear you."

"Tubby didn't hear you, Emmett."

Emmett lights another cigarette. "Well . . . I don't mind tellin' YOU fellows," he says, "'cause I know it won't git any further. See? . . ." The beer comes, and again the story is interrupted.

Now Mrs. Peel is a perfect lady. To show you the kind of a lady she is: years ago, when Mickshty Murphy was first elected to the police force, he once ran along the street ahead of her, brandishing his stick at a group of sidewalk loafers and shouting: "Move along there, boys! Clear the way! Here comes Mrs. Peel."

Her husband died years ago, and all her children have married well. She lives a secluded life in a big stone house on Pine Avenue, attended by a maid, a housekeeper, a gardener, and a chauffeur. Each autumn, when the asters die, she departs for Scotland, where she spends the winter with her sister; and each May, when the crocuses are pushing up through the lawn, she returns to the stone house, which has been kept in readiness all winter by the maid, the housekeeper, the gardener, and the chauffeur.

She is an altogether exemplary lady. She is like Caesar's wife. The thing that Emmett tells about her could not possibly have happened. That is what makes it so funny.

"Come on, Emmett. The lowdown."

"All about you and Mrs. Peel."

"Well," Emmett begins, "I was up in me room . . . and the old man . . . he shouts upstairs: . . . 'Emmett! . . . Somebody to see you! . . .

"I goes down . . . and who should be at the door but that . . . gud . . . damn . . . chauffer of Mrs. Peel's . . . dressed up like a . . . gud . . . damn . . . apple blossom. . . .

" 'Will ye step outside?' . . . he says. . . . 'Mrs. Peel's in the car. . . . She wants to speak to ye. . . .'

"Well . . . I go out. . . . There's Mrs. Peel. . . . 'How do ye do, Mr. Burke,' she says . . . nice and polite-like. . . . 'Have ye got anything on . . . fer this afternoon? . . .'

"Well . . . I've always got lots o' time . . . so I says: 'No . . . Mrs. Peel. . . . What makes ye ask? . . .'

" 'Would ye care to . . . come fer a drive' . . . she says . . . 'with me?'

"Well . . . 'Sure,' I says . . . 'I'll come fer a drive wit' ye.' . . . So I climbs into the * * * limousine . . . alongside o' . . . Mrs. Peel. . . .

"And we went for a ride . . . and 'twas a . . . gud . . . damn . . . good ride . . . too. . . . We went all the way . . . to Stooke's Corners, and back. . . . And when we got into town again . . . she says: . . . 'Mr. Burke . . . would ye care to . . . come and have supper wit' me? . . .'

"Well . . . I'd nothing on . . . so I says: . . . 'Don't mind if I do . . . Mrs. Peel . . .'

"So we go to her house . . . and have supper . . . gud . . . damn . . . good supper . . . too. . . . And after we'd et . . . Mrs. Peel . . . she waves to the maid . . . the little Sabourin girl. . . . YOU know her; and the kid comes in . . . wit' a bottle o' Scotch.

" 'Would ye care fer a toss?' . . . Mrs. Peel says that . . ."

Emmett raises a forbidding hand. " 'Never use it . . . Mrs. Peel . . .'

" 'Well . . . a glass o' wine then . . .'

" 'Well . . . mebbe one little glass' . . . I says. . . . 'Just one . . .'

"So Mrs. Peel . . . she waves again . . . and Sabourin comes in . . . wit' a bottle o' wine. . . .

"Well . . . we knocks off the wine . . . me and Mrs. Peel . . . gud . . . damn . . . good wine . . . too. . . . And after that . . . we go into the parlor. . . .

"And Mrs. Peel sits down . . . and starts playin' the piano. . . . Nice and soft-like. . . . None o' yer . . . gud . . . damn . . . rag-time. . . ."

"Semi-classical, sort of?"

"Sure. That's it. . . . Classy. . . . And I was singin' . . .

"Then Mrs. Peel jumps up . . . and switches on the radio. . . .

" 'Do ye dance . . . Mr. Burke?' . . . she says. . . .

" 'Well . . . nothin' fancy' . . . I says . . . but she holds out her arms . . . and I waltzes her around . . . a few times. . . .

"Then she backs away . . . and lays down on the sofy. . . ."

Emmett runs his two hands along in parallel lines to indicate the position of Mrs. Peel's body.

" 'Mr. Burke' . . . she says . . . 'will ye call me Daisy? . . . '

"Well . . . right then . . . the door-bell rings. . . .

"Sabourin goes to the door . . .

"Then she comes in . . . to where me . . . and Mrs. Peel was. . . . 'Mr. Burke' . . . she says . . . 'ye're wanted . . . '

"I smell a rat. . . .

"I gets up . . . and goes outside. . . . There was me old man. . . .

" 'Emmett' . . . he says . . . 'come home. . . . Ye're makin' a . . . gud . . . damn . . . fool o' yerself . . . playin' around wit' . . . these Protestant dogs.' "

RENDEZVOUS

by

Mary Heaton Vorse

AS they drove along in the spring sunshine, Sidney Moore couldn't get out of his mind that because they had come, a young New York boy named Harry Grimm lay dying now in a hospital fifty miles away.

Harry Grimm had come across the mountain to meet the New York men who were bringing food to the miners. Deputies had shot him. He was a "foreigner." He was organizing the miners. The deputies shot him because of this. He was going over the mountain to meet the other "foreigners" bringing in the food truck. The miners had telephoned the news just before they started from Knoxville.

The road wound around the mountain. From where he was, Sidney could see all four cars of their little caravan, and, lagging behind, the food truck. It was a queer business, he thought, their being there at all. They'd come, a dozen of them, to bring food to striking miners; it was a sort of test.

Miners had been murdered by deputies in two counties in the past months. Miners had been taken from their homes and from jails, beaten, and sent naked across the mountains. Soup kitchens had been blown up, and the relief workers' car dynamited. The miners' food trucks had been blockaded. Relief workers had been arrested on the charge of criminal syndicalism. Reporters, even, had been shot at and wounded. . . .

Sidney could hear the two men in back—Quinn, an editor of a magazine, and a liberal writer named Sanderson—talking about holding meetings with the miners. They were driving directly toward the threat which the mayor of Mapleton had sent them. He had telegraphed them that neither "they nor their ilk were wanted around here."

In spite of this threat, these innocent men were babbling about holding meetings and visiting mining camps. Sidney felt as if he possessed some dark truth that he could not communicate to the others. They were innocent. They did not know the South. There would be no meetings. No need to test con-

stitutional rights: there were none. . . . What was it the cashier in the coffee shop in Knoxville had asked him:

"What nationality are these people? I hear they're going up into the mountains in Kentucky, to set up some new kind of government." He looked at the other men. Quinn was sandy and compact, with an open clear-cut countenance and small, New England features. Sanderson had pronounced dark features; although young, he was inclined to be heavy. People often took Sidney for a square-head. He reflected that they all looked "foreign"—different from the natives of the South.

The road wound past blackened shacks without chimneys. Up a creek a cluster of these shacks was hanging on the cliff as by an eyelash. A mining camp. These mining camps, Sidney thought, were the most desolate habitations in the world.

"What do you think's going to happen, Moore?" Quinn asked, leaning forward.

"I think anything might," Sidney answered.

"They won't dare to do anything to us, though," said Quinn. Sidney knew that Quinn was thinking: "We're too distinguished a crowd, too well known; they wouldn't dare do anything to *us*!"

"I don't see why you think they'll feel any differently toward us than they did toward Harry Grimm," said Sidney. "He was coming to meet us—so in a roundabout way we're responsible for his getting shot. . . ."

The road made a swift turn. A new vista opened. They were going through a series of narrow valleys with swift, gay creeks running down them. High granite mountains rose abruptly from the creek bed. They were beautifully wooded, and already touched with spring in mid-February. The maples were in red bloom. The road did not run straight for twenty yards. Sidney had a feeling, as they drove swiftly through the brilliant spring morning, that they were making straight for the hate that had shot Harry Grimm at daybreak.

"What can we do? Why have we come? To bring food; to advertise what is happening in this remote place. Why have I come?" While he thought this, the white road slipped under their wheels. On one side of them the mountains rose steeply above; and below, on the other, were fields of yellow-ochre earth with bright green grass sprouting.

"We'll be passing into Kentucky in a minute," the taxi-driver remarked. "I wonder if they'll stop us at the border?" They all felt a little apprehensive.

There was a mounting feeling of insecurity. No one felt quite smug. Each one felt uncertain and a little ridiculous.

Two cars were drawn up at the state line. It was an imaginary line, and yet, thought Sidney, dividing one state of mind from another state of mind. . . . The little procession of cars had been dispersed, and the food truck was now far behind. Two of their cars had stopped at the Kentucky line. Sidney felt a growing excitement.

"Likely deputies stopped them," said Sanderson. But there were no deputies, the way was open. Sidney felt a light sense of disappointment. The other cars were merely waiting for the rest to come up. Newman, their spokesman, called out from his roadster—

"We think four of us had better go ahead and see the mayor first and find out what he'll let us do."

"Find out what he won't let us do," thought Sidney. The band of crusaders seemed to him absurd. He reflected that they would be grotesque, but for the tragedy of Harry Grimm. Murder had been committed because of them. Death had made them authentic; it made their mission dangerous, gave them a burnish of heroism.

A platform from which one might see far distant views had been cut out in the mountain shelf. A large placard was placed there, which said that Daniel Boone had first passed through this place in search of freedom and liberty. The little procession stopped to look at the view. They read with cynicism the placard about Daniel Boone and liberty; then they went on their way unmolested.

At Centreville they stopped to wait for the food truck to catch up, so that they could convoy it into Mapleton. It was a thrifty little town with long, wide streets shaded with trees. A truck full of clothes was to have joined them there. It had been sent by the workers of a mid-Western city. Their taxicab driver, who had been a miner and who was in sympathy with them, reported:

"That truck's been taken down a side road somewhere and overturned. They say the truck driver is shot, but he ain't hurt bad."

The little crowd of Northerners looked at each other. The invisible menace was taking form. They had seen nothing, no one had stopped them or hindered them on their way—yet. Still Harry Grimm lay dying, shot as he was coming to meet them; and now here was an unknown man—a man whose name they didn't even know, a truck driver from a mid-Western city, probably paid to drive the truck—shot, possibly killed, by the invisible enemy.

Sidney looked at the others. "I wonder they don't see what we're up against. I wonder they don't know it's white terror." They were still innocent; they were indignant about the truck.

On the road ahead of them was a blot of blue. Hundreds of miners in trucks and on foot, waiting to greet them. Another group stood behind the miners—armed deputies and the chief of police. They stopped the trucks, they stopped the cars. Sidney had a sense of fatality, of something happening that he had been waiting for. But there was, as yet, no relief in its having happened.

They got out of their cars, the food truck between the deputies and the miners. The Miners' Union had a storehouse in Mapleton. Quinn talked to the chief of police.

"Why can't we store our food in the storehouse?" he asked, reasonably. The chief looked at him, a little puzzled. Quinn was a pleasant-spoken fellow.

"It's against orders," he said. "You drive right through the town. You can't stop in Mapleton. There ain't going to be no meetings." Deputies mounted the cars and deputies swarmed on the food trucks.

Mapleton was built around a courthouse and a square. It was the county seat. In the square were hundreds of miners. They made clots of blue as they drifted around the square, as they formed uneasy groups together. A great many deputies ostentatiously armed were strutting around. Up in the cupola of the courthouse there was a nest of machine-guns. The Northerners got out of their cars. Sanderson said to Sidney:

"I haven't seen so many guns since Chateau-Thierry! I didn't know this was a war that we were coming to! I thought we were coming just to hold a meeting with the miners, and bring them some food."

"Well, you're in a war all right," said Sidney. "This is the class war. We've walked right into it." That was what had happened. They had stumbled into the class war. That was why there were machine-guns in the courthouse and why deputies bristled with guns. "They've found out—partly," thought Sidney. He had seen a Southern mob in a killing mood. . . . Now everything was quiet, waiting. He wondered if they didn't know yet that the hate which had killed Harry Grimm might attack them.

The little band divided. Part of them went down with the food trucks to the outskirts of the town. Sidney went over to the hotel, where the advance guard were meeting with the mayor. Around the room sat the principal men

of the town and the mayor, who was a veterinary. They were big rangy men, men of consequence in their community, men proud of themselves and sure of themselves. They knew they were right. There were coal operators here, the attorney of the Rocky Creek Mining Company. A benevolent looking Baptist pastor sat to one side. The veterinary mayor was a small, unimpressive looking person.

Sidney looked around swiftly. A peculiar feeling—not of apprehension and not of fear, but rather like a knowledge of evil—came over him. There is a murderous quality about white terror. White terror was what emanated from these men who had assembled to meet them at the Mapleton Hotel.

The lounge was a comfortable room of good proportions, and it had an open fire. The four men comprising the committee were at one end. Twenty men faced them. Two civilizations aligned against each other. The Northerners looked small and young in the face of their opponents, who were keeping up a tone of insolent and polite ceremony. Like the ceremony of wolf dogs who walk around and around with their hackles up. The elaborate courtesy was just **cracking**.

The atmosphere grew dense with the hatred of these men. This was the sort of impersonal hate which was like the paralysis of snake bite. Some day, Sidney thought, they will measure a current like this.

The mayor, an insignificant man, felt himself warm and backed by the powerful bigger men around him. "Watch your step," he said. "Don't have any meetings, or it will be my pleasure to have you all arrested, and to keep you in jail as long as I can!"

The meeting was breaking up. Everyone was standing. The mayor ran out into the hall, consulted someone, and ran back.

"Moreover, a group of you loitering on the street corner talking to miners, I'll call that a meeting!" Again he ran out. At someone's bidding he returned, with further orders:

"If you have any miners in your room, I'll call that a meeting too; and it will be my pleasure to arrest you."

"You mean that we can't entertain our friends in a private sitting-room which we've hired?" asked Newman.

"I mean just that," the mayor gave back with triumph.

"We are not here, I have told you," said Newman formally, "to go against your ordinances. But we shall broadcast your terrorism and your

disregard for constitutional rights from one end of America to the other." A tall man towered over Newman.

"I admire your nerve, coming down here where you don't know any of the conditions," he said slowly. "You've talked and read a lot about terrorism down here, but you'll find that when we get ready to be ugly, we can be real ugly. And you can have your stenographer write that down. I'll sign to that."

"I'll sign to that!"

"I'll sign to that!" others echoed.

"That means they're ready to lynch us," Sidney told Newman.

"Not quite so bad as that," said Newman mildly. He was keeping himself in hand, keeping his rising excitement from brimming over. He was spokesman, and had done a good job. A reporter from Knoxville came over to Sidney.

"Say, don't they know, don't they see," he inquired in a low tone, "that these men mean business? They'll do *anything*! You'd better get your food distributed and get out of town!"

The square was empty of miners, who had ebbed away toward the food trucks. But there were the deputies with their guns, and there were the machine-gun nests in the courthouse.

Newman asked Sidney, "Are you coming to the County Attorney's office?" The mayor had told them they would have to get permission to hold meetings even outside of town.

"No," said Sidney. "I'm going to see what's become of the trucks." All of a sudden the little studious band seemed to Sidney like a high comedy, as it wandered around from the mayor and operators to the County Attorney to get legal permission for a meeting. They would no more be given permission than the Germans would have given permission to cross No Man's Land with provisions for the French.

Sidney walked down a dirt road leading out of town. A bridge led over a creek. A granite mountain rose sheer above it. The mud was thick and gummy on the road, ochre-colored. The houses dwindled off as he walked along, and became less prosperous. Shacks of a mining community appeared on the mountain side. Down the road at last was a blue group of men again—the food truck.

They were, after all, holding a meeting of sorts. Food was being distributed. Someone was standing on the truck speaking, holding the crowd.

Trouble makers and curious people were prowling on the edge of the crowd. Deputies with their guns were everywhere.

And punctuating it all, the fantastic sheriff, an embodiment of pure evil, so evil that he became theatrical and comic. Lean, long, with claw-like hands, and unclean as a hairy spider. How had the clean hills uttered such a one? Yellow eyes, with a malevolent, terrifying sideways glance. A killer. The movies' unnatural exaggeration of evil. Yet there, horribly, he was, in the flesh, his venom directed against this innocent little company none of whom were agitators, none of them with experience even in the labor movement. This absurd little band of mercy which had come up into this war to quibble over constitutional rights and the right of relief trucks to bring food undisturbed.

Harry Grimm had been shot at dawn by a deputy, by a killer. . . .

A man named Nichols was talking. Nichols was talking like a fool, so Sidney thought from what words he could hear. "You'll get arrested," thought Sidney. A girl who belonged to the relief organization talked too. Now a miner was talking. Now someone shouted to the speaker from the crowd, something provocative—

"Your own brother is a deputy," cried the voice.

"Whoever says that about my brother is a god-damned liar!" This was fighting talk. The incredible sheriff whipped out two guns in his claws. The deputies stood there, evil, triumphant. The crowd began to run. People had drawn guns on both sides. For a moment every thing hung suspended—murder in the air, war in the air.

"I'm going to round up and arrest every goddam one of you!" the sheriff was shouting. The onlookers were flying.

"Let's get out of here," Quinn said, "no use of us all getting shot."

And now suddenly guns were put up. The menace had momentarily passed. They were arresting the girl, and Nichols.

"I'll go back and see that they don't take the food," Quinn said, "and see that it gets distributed. You go and find Newman and the others." They will have been arrested, thought Sidney. And I'll probably be arrested.

A woman drove up and spoke to Sidney.

"Are you one of the crowd that came up here?" she asked. "Did you hear what they were saying just now? Did you hear how they were stirring up the miners to riot? We got everything all quieted down—and they're stirring up the miners to riot, they're telling them they've got a right to organize,

they've got a right to picket! I heard that girl myself, telling them to hang on and not give up. They don't know what they're doing, coming down here and stirring up those people. I'd like to take you and show you how these folks live. They live like animals, whole families in a room.—I'm a doctor's wife.—There is more incest and feeble-mindedness in this county than anywhere!" She was almost crying in her emotion, a big woman, kind-faced. Her words tumbled over each other.

"We're none of us rich people," she said. "These mines are locally owned, and the mines—you know what they are. They're ruined. We had a depression before anyone else did. We're doubly hit. A hundred and fifty dollars a month is a big income here. A hundred a month is good. And we give ten per cent to our community chest. I never turn away anyone from my door. Days I feed sometimes six—eight people. We all do. When they come down from the hills hungry, we feed them. And I work all day sewing—we've got the miners' wives and the women coming in sewing, to try and clothe them. And now you come disturbing us, stirring them up. You take my husband, you take me: We come from poor, mountain folks. But we got out and we got ourselves an education—" Her words flowed over Sidney, overwhelming him. He could see the little band as the community, as this undoubtedly kind woman, saw them, with her classic cry: "The workers like to live like pigs!"

She was the voice of the comfortable population. She was not one of the combatants. She was supporting her side behind the lines.

"I wonder if she thought Harry Grimm should be killed?" thought Sidney. He felt sure she would, because this was a war, and all people who stirred up the miners were evidently Bolsheviks, and all Bolsheviks should be shot as **enemies of society**.

Quinn came hurrying up to Sidney. "They've arrested fifty of the miners. They're holding them for criminal syndicalism. They've got Nichols, and Mary Ray."

"Is the food distributed?" asked Sidney.

"Deputies got about one hundred pounds, the miners got the rest," said Quinn. They had arrived at the square. The elegant county attorney was just saying goodbye to Newman and the other three. He had kept them there, purposely. He was beautifully dressed, the picture of a courteous Southern gentleman, and he grinned a sardonic goodbye.

Looking back on it afterwards, it seemed humorous that they sat that evening, all of them in the sitting room, discussing their plans for the next day—how they were going to take food into the next county, and how they were going to visit the mining camps there. While they were discussing their plans, a knock came at the door. Two miners came in.

"We come to tell you about Harry Grimm," one of them said. "Seems like he's dying. We thought maybe someone of you might like to come over to the hospital. Someone from his own home town, maybe."

Newman asked, "Do you know how it happened? All we heard was that he was wounded." One of the miners, a young fellow in his early twenties with a clear profile and bright hair answered—

"Harry was staying to my house last night, and he didn't know if he'd go over the mountain path or by the jitney railway. I said, 'I hate for you to go by the railway. You best keep to the mountain. For I fear they'll try and get you.'

"He said, 'I've got no time for the mountain. I've got to go by the shortest way if I'm to meet them.' He was coming, picking up miners along the way, to meet you."

Thoughts spun in Sidney's head. All his life, coming nearer and nearer to him, had been Harry Grimm. All their lives they had been approaching each other. They had walked around New York's streets at the same time. At the same time, seeing the same things, viewing the same spectacles, maybe, been together without knowing each other in the same places. All the time they had been walking along different roads which converged, closer and closer. Sidney felt he knew Harry Grimm very well, as though he had always known him.

"We jest thought, seeing how he was coming to meet you, you'd like maybe one of you to go over to the hospital," the boy repeated.

"How far is it?" asked Quinn.

"T'ain't fur," said Jim. "Maybe twenty mile."

"How did it happen?" Newman asked again.

"He was a-walkin' down by the track with two other fellas. Two deputies come by on the hand car that runs the railways. The deputies backed up the car and stopped in front of the boys. Then Art Dillon shot Harry, and Ned Travers covered the other boys. They loaded Harry on the truck and arrested the others. They set Harry on a stone outside the hospital. He set there an hour, bleeding from the stomach. They wouldn't take him in **unless**

someone went responsible for his doctor's bill. I heard he was shot, and I went to see him at the hospital.

"I said, 'Buddy, I'm shore sorry I wasn't with you.' He was awful sleepy. I touched his face with my hand and asked if he knew me. He said he did.

"'But I got a hurtin' pain in my side, and I feel awful sleepy,' he said.

"Then I said, 'I got word that my house is raided, and they're looking for me, so I'll have to clear out and go, because they're after me.' They tole me when I come away that he was sinkin' fast, so I come here for you."

Newman asked, "What did they raid you for? Why do they want you?"

"I'd been speakin' to the miners—organizin'. Ef you're hongry, you're a Red, in Dell county. Ef you tell about it, you're a criminal syndicalist and a Bolshevik. I said, 'We miners are hongry'—so they raided my house and got a warrant out for me."

"You oughtn't be here now," said Quinn.

"I expect not; but they won't be watchin' for me yere. I had to come and git one of you."

"I'd like to go," said Sidney. He rose, and no one stopped him. This suddenly seemed to him the most important thing to do. He felt as though this were why he had come—that he had had an appointment all his life with Harry Grimm as they came together on their converging paths, as though Harry Grimm had something of deep importance to tell him. "He knows why he came; he'll tell me why I came," Sidney thought.

"All right," Newman said. "You go, Moore, if you want to." He seemed relieved. It wasn't important to anyone else, with all their concern.

"Lem Carter's got his Ford downstairs on the street," said Jim. The lobby was full of loafing men. Some of them Sidney recognized from the afternoon. They turned their heads to stare at Jim and the older miner, who hadn't talked at all, who had come to drive Jim. They could feel the hate of these men streaming out toward them. They got into the car; Jim and Sidney sat behind, and Lem Carter drove. Lem spoke for the first time.

"I don't like the looks o' them men," he said. "They's too many men for this time o' night. I heered talk of night riders."

A feeling of cold crawled up Sidney's back. Not apprehension, but as though he were steeling himself for an attack. There was silence in the car, then Lem Carter turned his head slightly—

"I heered how they might kidnap the lot o' you and ride you out o' the State."

"I'll be glad when yore out," said Jim. "I'll certainly be more easy in my mind when yore over the line. I ben mighty worried about you sense they shot Harry. He was the nicest feller you ever knew. They wasn't anybody around here but whut liked Harry. We felt like he was kin. He talked awful nice and awful sensible. He was the only foreign organizer they was. That's why they shot him. It's an awful pity. My sister's goin' to feel awful bad. When she went North to collect money, she said to me—

"'Honey, look out for Harry. Don't let them git him. I kin feel he don't sense the danger yere.' That was it. We couldn't make him *see*. He wouldn't believe that they was out to git him. But they was, and they got him."

They were silent. The car bumped on through the darkness. Sidney felt as though he knew all about this boy he had never seen. He was a little younger than himself. He belonged to the youth movement, and he had come here to organize.

"I hope we git there in time," said Jim. "I hope he's conscious. It'll mean an awful lot to his folks if someone from his home was with him."

Lem Carter said, "Yeah, I'll sure be glad when you git over the line. That crowd in the hotel lobby warn't there for no good." A spreading sense of imminent evil flowed over Sidney. Life was becoming simplified, as it was to Jim, as it was to Lem. It was becoming black and white.

"Here we are," said Lem Carter. They were going through the streets of a tidy town. They drew up in front of a new brick building, and went in.

"How is he?" Jim asked the nurse.

"He's conscious just now. He's rallied." Jim stared at the nurse. A look of deep intelligence passed between the two. She shook her head gravely.

"Not for long," she said.

The boy Harry Grimm was lying with open eyes. All color had drained away under his tan, and his lips were pale. He had thick black hair. Jim and Sidney stood there, the nurse on one side. Harry Grimm looked at them with sightless eyes. Jim spoke gently.

"Buddy, do you know me?" he asked. The boy smiled very slightly, his lips outlined, "Yes, Jim."

"Buddy," said Jim, "I brought a friend from yore home town. Don't you want to send a message to yore folks? He's one o' the fellers you was goin' to meet today." The dying boy's face brightened. He spoke very low, so that Sidney had to bend close to him.

"Tell them," he said, "I'm some lucky they didn't kill me." The effort

had been too great. He closed his eyes. A frightful pain gripped Sidney, a sense of anguish and loss and fury came over him. It was as if indeed this boy had been his childhood friend, from his home town. The nurse held the boy's pulse. She shook her head gently. She said in a low tone—

"You'd best go now."

They walked out quietly. Sidney's heart filling, overflowing with grief, with fury, grieving for a friend, a murdered friend.

"We kin 'venge him," Jim said gently.

Now Sidney knew what he had come for. He had come up to find that his world was divided into two camps. He was on the side of his murdered friend Harry Grimm, on the side of his friend Jim, the miner. Lem Carter came to meet them.

"Git in," he said. "I'm goin' to take you over the line. I ben phonin' to Mapleton. The night riders has rounded up all yore friends and taken them away. I'll git you out of Kintucky over another road." Sidney got in without answering.

"They're right," he thought. "Why shouldn't they kidnap me? I am their enemy. I am in a war against them."

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Whit Burnett and Martha Foley, who, having been duly sworn according to law, depose and say that they are the editor-owners of STORY: Devoted Solely to the Short Story, and that the following is, to the best of their knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 25th day of September, 1933.

EMANUEL E. HARPER

(My commission expires March 30, 1934.)

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CONTRIBUTORS

DOROTHY McCLEARY, the wife of H. M. Hamilton, critic and writer, lives in Brooklyn. She is a native of Washington, D. C. Under the name of Dorothy Hamilton, she wrote for the old *Smart Set* and *Broom*. . . . William March, author of "Company K," has appeared before in *STORY*, and is included in "A Story Anthology," (*Vanguard*, October). The author of numerous stories, Mr. March yet finds time to be the vice-president of the Waterman Steamship Lines, and now represents the firm in Hamburg. He was in New York recently on a business visit. He and William Faulkner used to play in the same backyard in the South occasionally, when they weren't scrapping. . . . Daniel Fuchs was born in 1909 in Brooklyn. He attended the public schools of New York and the College of the City of New York. He now teaches school, and is completing a novel along the lines of the characters in "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" As most readers will recognize, the title comes from the poem by Walt Whitman, which begins: "Come, my tan-faced children, Follow well in order, get your weapons ready, Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes? Pioneers! O pioneers! . . ." . . . Leane Zugsmith is finishing a novel which *Smith & Haas* will publish early in the spring, "A Preface to Guilt." . . . Isaac Bein is a native of Bessarabia, but came to the United States in 1906 at the age of eleven. He is an employe of the city of Chicago, and "Christmas Greetings" is his first published story. . . . Sherwood Anderson, now once more a resident of New York, has just finished working over "Winesburg, Ohio," into play form for probable New York presentation. Sherwood Anderson, with "Winesburg, Ohio," a small volume of short stories unified by the locale in which the characters moved, pretty definitely marked the turning point in American short story writing, and since that volume's appearance little more than a decade ago few significant American short stories have been unaffected by the element of depth which was contributed in the viewpoint of Winesburg. . . . Mr. Anderson's story this issue is a new one of a series he has in mind for a possible volume on the old advertising days in Chicago. . . . E. P. O'Donnell is the author of "Arrangement in Black," (No. 8), and other short stories in the magazines. He lives in New Orleans. . . . Eugene Jolas, founder and editor of *transition*, which has brought to light numerous new talents in both America and Europe, lives in Paris where he is devoting more and more time to

purely experimental writing and publishing. . . . Russell MacCallum is a Canadian, living in Buckingham, Quebec, and although he has had several stories and sketches in Canadian magazines, is presented in this issue for the first time on this side of the boundary. . . . Mary Heaton Vorse, who has spent several months recently in Germany studying the situation of the country under Hitler and contributing to *The New Republic* and other periodicals, has been active in radical and literary circles in the United States for many years. When at home, she lives on Cape Cod but is now in New York. . . .

NOTES

H. L. MENCKEN's recent leading of a brass band over the radio to demonstrate his enthusiasm for beer is not going to make up to the writers of the land for his retirement as editor of *The American Mercury*. American writers are enthusiastic about beer, usually, but they have been even more enthusiastic about Mr. Mencken as an editor. From the purely short story standpoint we must somewhat qualify all this. For nearly eight years the Mencken influence depreciated the American short story, because of his emphasis on the sociological article as the important form of literary interpretation of the American mores. Every other quality magazine copied, and short stories were relegated into the obscure position of poetry in their pages. In the last two years a change set in, and during that time the *Mercury* printed some of the most distinguished short stories ever published in this country. The reception by the *Mercury* of new writers has always been an eager one, and the patience and consideration shown by Mr. Mencken personally to young people has made him many friends for life, whether he remains an editor or not. It is good to hear that he plans to bring his book, "The American Language," up to date. Published in 1919, it remains the most valuable and scholarly work written on the subject. * * * "The Best British Short Stories of 1933," edited by Edward J. O'Brien and published this fall by Houghton, Mifflin Company, is dedicated to James Stern, a young English writer who made his first appearance in an American magazine in *STORY*. * * * So many enthusiastic letters have come to *STORY* that no effort has been made to print them, but now and then the feeling in them seems so genuine and heart-warming, we have decided to quote one or two recent ones. "What I really want to tell you," writes a correspondent, "is that I am continually running into non-literary people who have discovered, in *STORY*; that there actually are in this world short stories particularly for them. I mean people who had long since given up the idea that magazine short stories were ever worth reading." An-

other writes: "I want to thank you for publishing 'Nigger Schoolhouse' by T. R. Carskadon. As a mother, as a too-sensitive child now grown into a too-sensitive woman, and as a Southerner whose Southern-born father acquired chicken-pox at the age of fifty-four giving a lift in his automobile to two little darkies who had never been in an automobile, I think 'Nigger Schoolhouse' is perfectly beautiful. That may be trite and hackneyed, but it's true. That story is just one of the reasons why I'm so glad to have *STORY* coming to me. I'm going to have my eleven-year-old son read it and if it doesn't do something to his social consciousness, I'll drown him!" * * * The flood of contributions from English instructors (three English instructors appeared in the October *STORY*) continues. The latest of this newly enfranchised type of writer—school was never like this in our days!—is a former professor of English literature in the Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Siam. . . . For those who are still undergraduates, the first college short story contest sponsored by *STORY* will be of interest. Some of the best stories that have appeared in these pages have come from campuses. These include "Etched in Steel," by Lyford Moore, *STORY* No. 13, which even won a college prize but was never printed on the campus. R. C. Woods' "The Ballad-maker," another prize story, remained unpublished until it appeared in November *STORY*.

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